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- FEATURED INSIDE**
- * Daedalus Encounter
 - * Virtual Pool THE DOG'S BALLS
 - * Frontier: First Encounters
 - * Chaos Control YAWN-TEST
 - * Terminal Velocity
 - * Phantasmagoria
 - * Sim Tower FLOORLESS FUN

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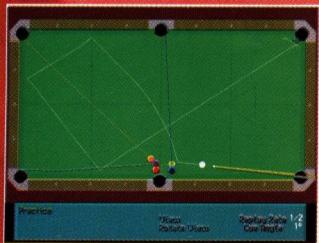
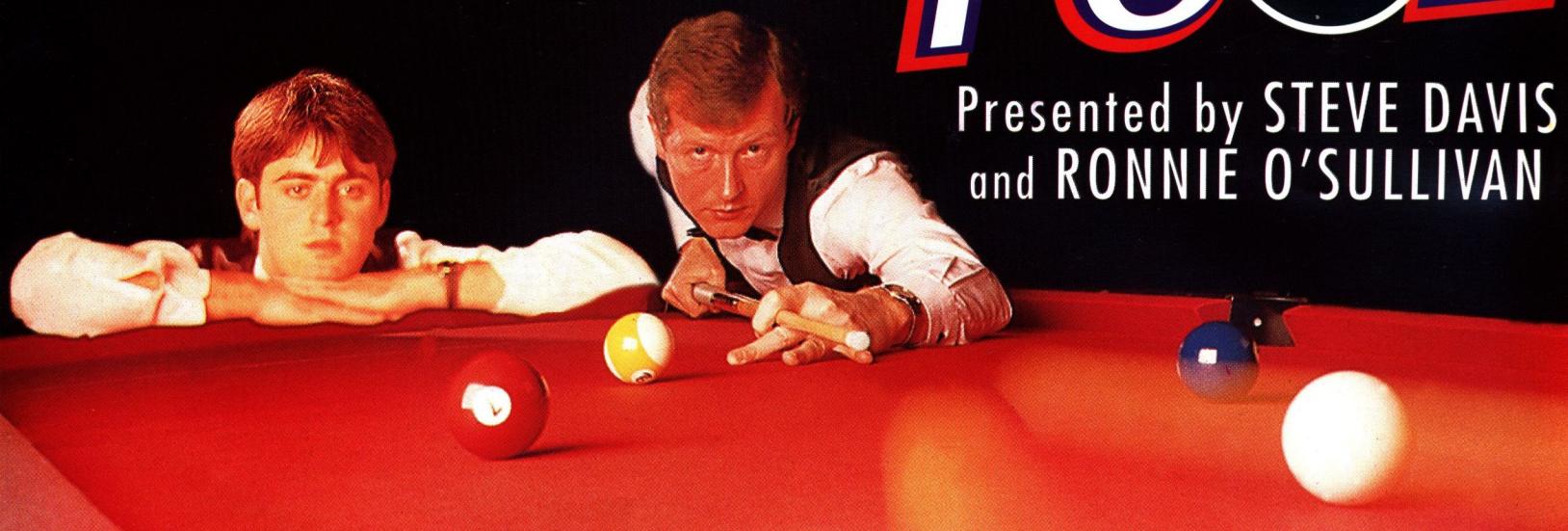
THE NEED FOR SPEED
A propeller head's guide to ninja PCs





Virtual Pool

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What the professionals say about...



STEVE DAVIS:

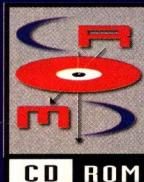
Six times Embassy World Snooker Champion, and a recent finalist in the European Nine Ball Masters

"The first time I saw this game I thought WOW! I've played other computer games before but I've never got so involved. I didn't think you'd be able to get this experience from a game. It really does feel like you're hitting something; the balls feel real and 3D, the whole thing is frighteningly realistic."

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN:

World Rank number four Snooker Player and an accomplished pool player who regularly plays in the European Nine Ball Pool Masters

"I think Virtual Pool is brilliant. It can teach you what spin does to the ball and to check the different angles. The more you play it, the better it gets. It feels real, even to professionals."



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This month's cover game is the awesome *Command & Conquer* from Westwood. It blends fast-paced, real-time action with some of the slickest presentation ever seen on the PC. We've also got a special feature on how to turn your trembling 486 into a fully-fledged Ninja-bast and more reviews and previews than you can wiggle a joystick at. Enjoy!

PC ZONE

Dennis

A DENNIS PUBLICATION

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PPA

REVIEWS

52 Command & Conquer

WESTWOOD'S SPECTACULAR strategy experience is finally revealed amidst whoops of delight and much celebration. *Dune 3* you say? No way! This is better. Find out why in our WORLD EXCLUSIVE review.

58 Loadstar

IT WOULD SEEM that Rocket Science's first foray into the world of pc games has met with a resounding thumbs down. You've heard the phrase "game on rails"? Well this is just plain ridiculous.

60 1830

NOT A ROLE-PLAYING adventure set in Benidorm where you have to get the bra off the bimbo in the swimming pool, but a *Transport Tycoon*-ish jaunt from US Gold.

63 Face Off

TWO ICE HOCKEY sims battle it out on the ice to see who goes through to the final against *NHL Hockey '95*.

66 Virtual Pool

MOVE OVER ARCHER McCLEAN, *Virtual Pool* from Interplay is the best pool game ever and clears up every time.

68 Dominus

THE LONG-AWAITED fantasy battle game from US Gold finally reaches the shelves after months of tweaking. But was it worth the wait?

70 Jagged Alliance

THE ISOMETRIC strategy game genre gets a shot in the arm with this brilliant island hopping action-fest from Mindscape. *UFO* without the aliens.

72 Sim Tower

SIM CITY SIDEWAYS and on a smaller scale. Construct monstrous carbuncles with more lifts than Geoff Capes and then watch 'em crumble!

74 Daedalus Encounter

IS IT A GAME or is it a movie? No one knows for sure, but Tia Carrera's in it, so it can be that bad, can it?

76 Frontier: First Encounters

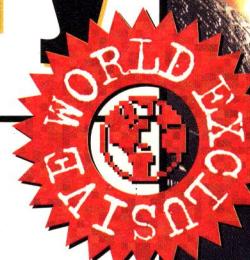
CAN DAVID BRABEN pull it off again, or will his latest creation-on-a-theme be swallowed up in a wave of mediocrity, patch disks and bugs?

78 Man Utd: The Double

THEY DIDN'T quite manage to snatch it from Kenny's grasp this year, but this is by far the best Man Utd product for the PC to date.

81 Alien Breed: Tower Assault

THE TOP-DOWN arcade classic gets a make over and looks much better for it. But why is it on CD-ROM?



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84 Chaos Control

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WE TAKE A SNEAK look at the pretty point 'n' click puzzler-packed adventure from Divide By Zero.

34 The Raven Project

MINDSCAPE JUMP on the "game on rails" train, and in a fair helping of gameplay in with the graphics.

36 Dr Drago's Madcap Chase

YET ANOTHER "revolutionary" game makes its way onto the PC amidst gasps off "but it's a board game!"

38 Phantasmagoria

AS THE GOTHIC interactive horror flick from Roberta Williams edges closer to release, the "Famous Five" stumble across a quite extraordinary adventure.

40 Picture Perfect Golf

YET ANOTHER GOLF SIM, but this time it's photorealistic and from Empire Interactive.

42 Prisoners of Ice

INFOGRAMES CONTINUE its love affair with H.P. Lovecraft and invest in some rather impressive Motion Capture technology to bring its latest point 'n' click adventure to life -no weirdness this time round, just Nazis...

45 Space Quest 6

THE LATEST in the laugh-a-minute space ace adventure from Sierra is jetting its way to a galaxy near you soon.

49 Terminal Velocity

APOGEE's best kept secret is revealed to a resounding crescendo of praise and cries of "When's the full version coming out?" We see what the fuss is about.

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FEATURES

3D Hell

ARE FLASH GRAPHICS killing PC games at the expense of gameplay? We get on the case and track down some top bods to comment on the growth of gloss in games.

Windows '95

DOS IS DEAD. Long live Windows '95. The new Operating System from Microsoft is finally ready to ship. We grab the latest beta version and see if it really is possible to play *Doom*, *Descent* and write a letter to your Aunty Beryl all at the same time.

The Need For Speed

A PROPELLOR HEAD'S guide to Ninja PC's. We take a look at how you can make your PC run faster; what new kit to buy; and how to make sure that your investment is future proof.

HARDWARE

Miro Video 12PD MPEG Card

AN MPEG CARD that doesn't cost the earth? Sounds too good to be true. Dave Mathieson casts a sceptical eye over the latest "revolution" to come out of France.

Pentium OverDrive Chip

WE TAKE A LOOK at Intel's miracle chip and see if it really is worth splashing the cash on an upgrade, or splashing the cash on a new machine altogether.

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PC ZONE

July 1995 Issue Twenty Eight

COVER DISK

HD Disk Version

Jagged Alliance

The demo of this rather splendid isometric strategy game from Mindscape is so brilliant, we couldn't fit it on one floppy disc, hence there are two of those plastic things on the front of the HD version of PC Zone this month. Stick it in your floppy drive immediately and you'll be transported to a land of sun, sea and sawn-off shot guns. There's danger lurking at every corner as you guide your crack unit of carefully selected troops across a minefield of enemy activity, freeing hostages and kicking terrorist butt as you go. This is no club 18 to 30 holiday, it's X-COM in paradise land.

CD-ROM Version

Yet another jam-packed CD sits proudly on the front of the CD-ROM version of the magazine this month, with yet more exclusive playable demos and classic releases that are guaranteed to keep your CD-ROM drive spinning throughout the long summer months.

As well as the superb *Jagged Alliance* demo (also on the floppy version of the mag) we've got fully-playable demos of the brilliant two-player action blaster *Alien Breed: Tower Assault*; the graphically stunning *Braindead 13* and *Kingdom: The Far Reaches*; the bung-tastic footie manager sim *Ultimate Soccer Manager*; sneak previews of *Apache Longbow*; *The Last Dynasty* and an exclusive look at the forthcoming *The Pleasures of Sex* from Telstar.

What's more, due to popular demand we've included a special round up of some of the best action demos currently around for the PC, as well as a selection of some of the more interesting shareware that's knocking about on the bulletin boards at the moment.

What more could any self-respecting games addict want, eh?

Basic Annual Subscription Rate:

UK HD £44.99 UK HD Direct Debit £42.99

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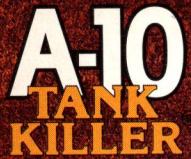


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about RED BARON . . .

"One of the most exhilarating flying experiences around"

— PC REVIEW

"If you own a PC with VGA graphics, buy Red Baron or you are a complete dork! Unmissable dogfighting action for all. Red Baron is, well ""gobsmacking" basically"

— ZERO

about

ACES OF THE PACIFIC . . .

"All in all a mega thumbs up for Aces of the Pacific" — PC ZONE

"Incredible attention to detail"

— PC FORMAT

about

ACES OVER EUROPE . . .

"AOE has some of the most exciting dogfighting action seen in a PC flight sim. An immensely enjoyable game."

— PC FORMAT

"Our advice — get it, play it, enjoy it"

— PC PLUS

Bulletin

Star Wars: The Next Generation

A

LTHOUGH THE FUTURE of LucasArts is currently uncertain, with George Lucas rumoured to be considering selling the company (including the THX sound system and special effects production house Industrial Light & Magic) in an effort to fund the new *Star Wars* film projects himself, the next generation of walkie-talkie, point-and-click adventures are likely to appear around the end of next year.

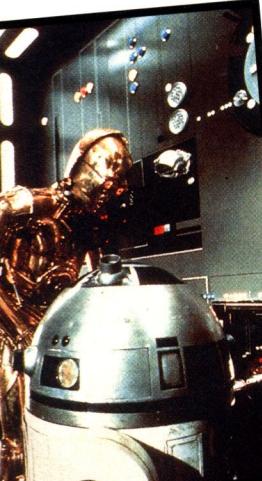
Developers and programmers have been busy establishing close links with script writers, and although 20th Century Fox owns the rights to the previous films, Lucas holds the rights to the underlying characters and is keen to forge stronger links between the forthcoming films and the next generation of games.

The first of the new *Star Wars* movie trilogy is expected to be released in '97 (the 20th anniversary of the original *Star Wars* film) and will again feature ground-breaking special effects. This time round, however, Lucas intends to rely entirely on computer-generated material rather than on models, and we can expect to see similar effects used in future games projects.

As far as voices and cast are concerned, it looks likely that it will be an "all or nothing deal", which could include the whole cast of the original trilogy (as in *Star Trek: TNG - A Final Unity*) doing the voice-overs and characterisation. With big-name stars, such as Harrison Ford, now claiming around \$10 million a movie, however, it looks more likely that the game may feature the voices of the new cast (Kenny Brannagh is rumoured for the role of the young Jedi Knight Obi-Wan) and a completely new time scale and setting to make it all the more authentic. Whereas Ford has already snubbed LucasArts by refusing to do the voice-overs for the *Indiana Jones* adventure games, Mark Hamill has so far proved to be no stranger to the PC games arena, with a starring role in Origin's *Wing Commander 3* and a cameo voice over as the baddy in LucasArts' *Full Throttle*.

As for *Indiana Jones*, the fourth movie in the series is currently "on the way", despite

- Harrison Ford claiming that he wasn't interested in picking up his bull whip any more. A new *Indiana Jones* adventure game is also set for release around the same time, boasting beautiful hi-res graphics and the burning wit and wisdom of the previous games.



Rebel Assault 2

Here are the first ever screen shots to be released of what promises to be the sequel of the century, *Rebel Assault 2*. Little is known about the project as yet, although it is said to be technically superior to anything yet released and urinates all over the current crop of racey shoot 'em up thingies which inhabit the world of PC games at present.

As far as plot goes, it will inevitably involve "the dark side" and zipping about the place in a rather zippy B-Wing ship. Apart from that, all we can reveal is that it's being rendered by Mechadeus (the guys who did *The Daedalus Encounter*), and is the first LucasArts product to feature live actors, and so will probably be rather fab. More on this soon.



More PCs Than Ever

A recent report in *The Times* indicated that over one million PCs were sold to British households last year. The total expenditure exceeded £827 million, which is more than was spent on video recorders or audio systems. The average price was just over £1,000, and over 60 per cent of the PCs sold were equipped with a dual-speed CD-ROM drive.

Other research indicates that one in four households now has a PC at home, although over a fifth of these were purchased before 1990.

Microsoft has also been doing some research, and in a survey of over 2,000 adults in Britain, France and Germany, it claims that, given an extra hour in the day, 37 per cent of French PC users would rather use a computer than spend "intimate time" with a lover. A measly 11 per cent of the romantic British would plump for the same option and no doubt over 80 per cent of Germans would rather watch some paint dry.

Microsoft also alleges that a staggering one in ten of the population intends to buy a PC this year.

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ CYBERPUNK PLATFORM

South African developer Reality Interactive has almost finished its manic platformer *Cyril The Cyberpunk*, which boasts some of the finest backgrounds and largest sprite characters ever seen in a platform game on the PC.

The finished game will feature a fully animated "comic book" style intro, masses of different levels, four levels of difficulty and a special cheat menu which can be accessed with secret codes to make it all easier.

Cyril The Cyberpunk is due for release at the end of June.

Contact R.I. on (+27 21) 616 462.

**+++ NASCAR TRACK PACK**

Papyrus is set to release an expansion pack for the smash hit *NASCAR Racing*. Cynics will no doubt chuckle profusely at the prospect of punters lashing out another £20 on yet more boring oval tracks, but Papyrus reckons these tracks are among the most gruelling on the speedway circuit and that no *NASCAR* fan should be without 'em. The *NASCAR Expansion Pack* is due out in June and is expected to retail for around £25.

**+++ NO WIN SITUATION**

Despite recent murmurings to the contrary, a spokesperson for IBM says that there are no plans for any kind of joint marketing campaign with Microsoft's *Windows '95* operating system.

Bruce Claffin, general manager of products and brand management for the IBM Personal Computer Company, was recently reported as saying that since IBM has made a "significant investment" in OS/2, promoting a rival operating system would be inadvisable.

(Right) Little men in pointy hats with big balls, wearing dresses. This is going to be well weird!



Warhammer Fantasy Battle



WAR GAMERS will no doubt be well chuffed to hear that Games Workshop have finally struck a deal to license its massive

Rumour has it that the developers at Mindscape have been working very closely with the Games Workshop crew in an effort to translate the whole set-up onto the PC without losing any of the gameplay or strategy.

For starters, all the characters have been rendered on Silicon Graphics work stations, and to say the whole thing looks awesome is a bit of an understatement. As for gameplay, because there's not any code around yet we really can't comment, except that we do know that it will be drastically affected with the introduction of a "real-time" battle scenario.

Stateside it's all happening too, with Mindscape's American counterparts busily working on the first Warhammer 40,000 game. Going under the working title of *Dark Crusader*, it uses a 3D first person perspective engine to draw the players into the fantasy environment and effectively translate the rather laborious fighting elements of 40K into a fast-paced action-fest on the PC. Before you start shouting "Doom-clone" from the roof tops, you might like to know that *Dark Crusader* will require a bit more strategy on the player's part, who will in fact be leading a squad of artificially intelligent Marines (we didn't think there was any other type of Marine?!). Although they will react differently to varying situations, you'll also have to be familiar with some of more well-known movements, formations and squad configurations to be successful in battle (just as in the original game).

Little else is known about the project as yet, except that it will be in SVGA throughout and each stage of the plot will be swept along with video footage featuring all the main characters à la *Wing Commander 3*. Both games are due for release later in the year.



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Crossfire

Formerly known as *Project Morphs*, Electronic Art's *Crossfire* from Delphine Software (the creators of the revolutionary *Flashback*) is looking rather spectacular, and it's not even due for release until September.

Despite being pitched as an "Interactive Movie", *Crossfire* looks set to raise more than a few eyebrows with its sumptuous cinematics, lush scenery and thriller plot which runs like an Indiana Jones movie in overdrive. Although the game is based on the tried and tested "hero versus the world" format, it promises to deliver in terms of gameplay, with a fully-rendered, real-time interactive 3D world, which the player is free to explore at his/her leisure. The result is an environment more akin to a mish-mash of *Virtua Fighter* meets *Dark Forces*, rather than the more static worlds of *Alone 3* and *Bioforge*, and an altogether more involving experience for the player.

As far as comparisons with *Flashback* go, Delphine maintains that *Crossfire* is leaps and bounds (no pun intended) ahead of the original and everything else since, for that matter. As well as being full of jaw-dropping, pre-rendered animated cut-scenes, Conrad's superb movements are the result of high-tech motion-capture techniques, rather than the in-vogue rotoscoped sprites, which allow the hero to be placed anywhere in the 3D environment and be viewed from any angle. And on top of this, all the characters move with a familiar human-like gait and have realistic mannerisms, despite being made up of polygons.

With six huge levels to work through; more speech and characters to interact with than *Flashback*; and an improved control interface, too, *Crossfire* looks set to leave the gaming fraternity gasping when it's released in September, which coincidentally, is also when Amazing Studios' *Heart of Darkness* is set for release.

Thunderhawk 2

Cube Design is putting the finishing touches to the sequel to the PC version of the Sega Mega PC CD helicopter combat sim, *Thunderhawk 2*.

The PC version promises to deliver all the intensity and gameplay of the original, along with such wonderful 32-bit enhancements as undulating (*que?*), fractal-mapped 3D terrains, 256 colour graphics and polygon-generated objects and enemies.

If that wasn't enough, the CD is also working on *Thunderhawk: The New Frontier*, which is due for release later next year.

Set 76 years in the future, the player must pilot an advanced chopper-come-space ship and use the state-of-the-art weapons to blow extremely large holes in all of those nasty alien-type things.

Thunderhawk 2 is due for release in August.

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Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ ACE COLLECTION
Flight sim fanatics will be pleased to hear that Sierra has just released the complete *Aces* series on one CD-ROM. The special *Aces Collection* includes examples of some of the finest flight sims knocking about on the PC, including *Red Baron* and *Red Baron Mission Builder*, *Aces of the Pacific*, *World War II 1946*, *Aces Over Europe* and *A10 Tank Killer*. And as if all that wasn't enough, there's also *Aviation Pioneers: Museum of Flight*, a reference CD packed with text, photographs and multimedia presentations of historic moments in aviation.

The *Aces Collection* is out now. For further details of price and availability contact Sierra on 01734 303322.



+++ DOUBLE VALUE PACKS
Compilation bundles normally include one top game (if you're lucky) and a load of crap craftily stuck on by the publisher to increase perceived value by the punter. Not so the new Double Value Packs from Telstar.

With prices starting from a mere £29.99, the current crop features such masterpieces as *7th Guest* and *Dune*, *Cannon Fodder* and *Beneath a Steel Sky*, *Alone in the Dark* and *Shadow of the Comet* along with the rather fab *Syndicate Plus* and *UFO*. More top bundles are in the offing, all guaranteed to keep you happy and in pocket.

For further details contact Telstar on 01932 222 232.

+++ THE SOUND OF KOSS
Direct from the U.S. of A comes a new range of "brilliant" computer speakers. Reputedly known the world over for its superior-quality audio products, Koss speakers come with a splendid "no questions asked Lifetime Warranty"; are magnetically shielded; and feature bass and treble boosts for top sound reproduction.

For further details contact Spectra Video on 0181 900 0024.



High Octane

ALL EYES WERE ON Bullfrog at the recent E3 show held in Los Angeles recently, which is not at all surprising as they were there showing off (amongst other things) a rather stunning new racing game that uses an enhanced Magic Carpet engine.

Called *High Octane*, it's set in the bleak streets of the 21st century at a time when joy riders stop at nothing and slow down for no one. Featuring a fully-texture-mapped environment, players hurl at speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour down pedestrian packed streets in one of six futuristic cars, easing off the gas only to take a shot at rival joy riders with their on-board chain gun or rocket launcher.

Other "tracks" include busy cityscapes, open wastelands and sand swept deserts, whilst each of the six armour-plated cars feature different weapons and accessories so players can remove any unwanted obstructions that might be blocking their road to glory and the finishing line.

The game reportedly boasts a wicked AI, so players will need to take advantage of the practice mode before entering any kind of drive to the death contest, whilst

there's talk of network support for up to 12 players so you can battle it out with your pals and burn some rubber with your brother.

High Octane is due for release from Electronic Arts on CD-ROM at the end of June.



Joystick Overload

CH have just announced a few new releases due in the summer to beef up their already extensive line of joysticks and PC peripherals.

First up are the Pro Throttle and F-16 Flightstick Pro. The Pro Throttle will feature 20 programmable functions and a throttle slide action which moves backwards and forwards for complete control. Using a simple DOS-based interface, it requires no specialist software support and can store over 400 macro characters.

To complement the new throttle, the F-16 Flightstick Pro is an advanced stick, designed to cope with the latest flight sims. It's been described as "sleeker" than previous CH sticks and will feature four four-way switches and four push buttons, as well as trim controls. When used with the Pro Throttle it will provide prop heads with 20 programmable functions, whilst the stand-alone stick will feature 12.

The company is also working on some new pedals that have been designed for use with flight sims and racing games, and a new game card which gives the user eight axes for four joystick inputs. Billed as the fastest game card on the market, it's also due for release in the summer. All prices are yet to be confirmed.

Contact CH on 01462 456780 for further details.

Rollcage

The PC has been crying out for a decent off-road racing game ever since people started taking short cuts in *IndyCar*, and it looks as though Team 17 has got it well and truly sorted.

Rollcage is a high-speed, fully-texture-mapped, Gouraud-shaded, off-road, 3D racing game that boasts a rather spectacular 70 frames per second (well, on a Pentium anyway) and a variety of camera angles from which to view all the action.

Players have a choice of ten cars to choose from and can race over 20 different tracks, including deserts, stunt tracks, grassland and even multi-storey car parks! All the cars handle and drive differently, and players can opt for a manual or automatic gearbox to make it easier.

As for the opponents, they reportedly possess a wicked AI and will think nothing of shunting you into a tree or off the track. And what's more, damaged cars have dents and windows smash, while crashing your car seriously effects the handling and speed.

Rollcage will support various driving wheels and can be played head-to-head down a serial link too.

Rollcage is due for release in October.

Allegiance

Team 17 is finally jumping onto the 3D shoot 'em up band wagon with *Allegiance*, an action-packed, blast-fest featuring fully texture-mapped graphics all rendered in glorious SVGA.

They'll be ten huge missions to wade through, including sabotage runs and assassinations; over 50 different types of baddie to blast and loads of weapons and ammo to do the job.

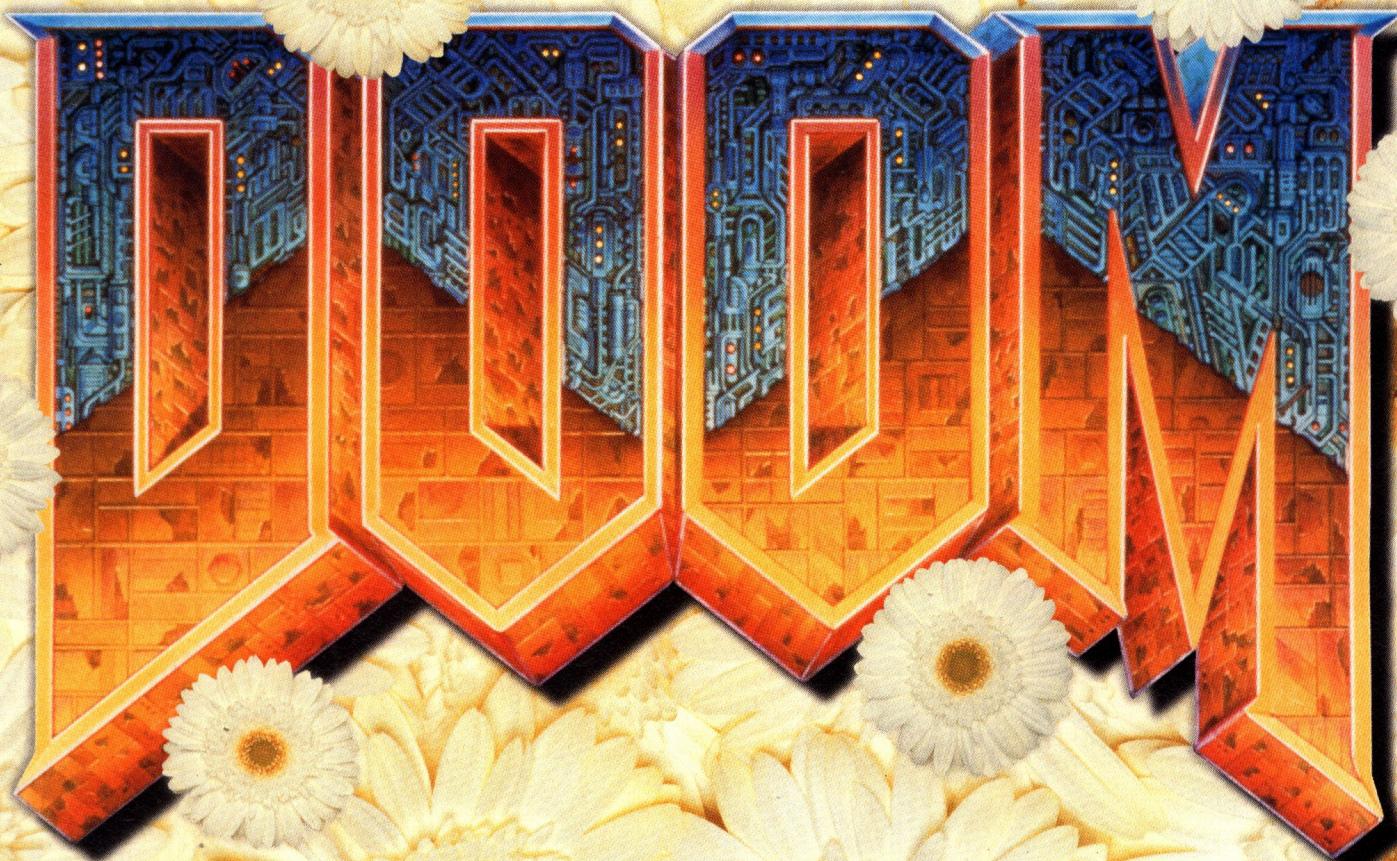
Unlike previous 3D games of this genre, however, Team 17 maintains that *Allegiance* is as strong on strategy as it is on firepower, and will take more than just quick reactions to complete. It has built in a multi-player facility that will also enable players to either play head-to-head or as a team via a network.

Allegiance is due for release in November.



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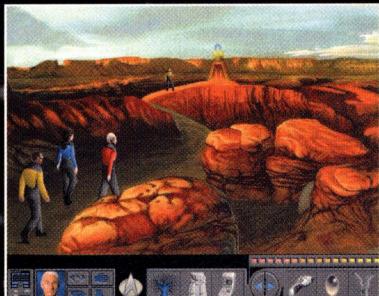
Tension boils on the bridge as another Red Alert appears imminent



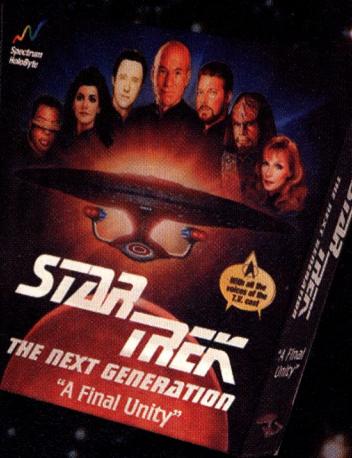
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 **Spectrum
HoloByte**  **MICRO PROSE**

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ CLUB SINCLAIR

The top bods at Sinclair Direct have decided to launch a club that offers its members monthly special offers, reduced prices, a technical support line, a regular news letter and even game tips – all for a measly £5.

Joining is easy, just a question of sending off your name and address along with the £5 membership, and on receipt, members will receive a free mouse house and mouse mat, a copy of the club magazine and full details of all the special offers for that particular month. SD reckons that even if you only buy a few games a year you'll still probably end up making a saving and, of course, you'll get all the extra benefits of belonging to the club.

For further details contact Sinclair Direct on 0171 263 2333.

+++ DUAL PORT AND PAD

Technoplus has actively taken the lead as far as two-player games on the PC are concerned, and has bundled its new PC Control Pad with its rather super TechnoPlus Powercard.

The gamepad, which sports an eight-way controller and three fire buttons, normally retails for around £12.99, while the game card (which is auto-configuring and requires no software driver disk) fits neatly into a single ISA slot, providing two independently switchable joystick ports, and makes two-player games a simple matter of plugging in and playing.

The TechnoPlus Gamepack will retail at around £24.99.

For more info contact Technoplus on 01604 768711



+++ TOMB RAIDER

Due from Core soonish is *Tomb Raider*, a 3rd-person, 3D-action adventure where the player guides a 3D polygoned, texture-mapped heroine through numerous atmospherically rendered 3D environments in pursuit of an incredible secret. Speaking of which, Core is playing this one very close to its chest at the moment and won't tell us anything more about it. However, a well-informed guess might suggest that it won't be a million miles away from *Bioforge* or the forthcoming *Crossfire* from Electronic Arts.



(Left) "I may not have a mouth but I'll squeeze your spots in my hydraulics!"

Rise 2: Resurrection

MIRAGE RECENTLY announced that it is currently working on a sequel to the best looking beat 'em up to reach the PC, *Rise of the Robots*.

Imaginatively titled *Rise 2: Resurrection*, it will feature the same stunning visuals; fully-animated, parallax-scrolling backgrounds; 18 new, perfectly rendered pugilists; a cornucopia of new moves (including a much needed jump over your opponent facility) and a versus mode where you can play any robot off against another, as well as grappling, weapons and missiles.

Hopefully, what all these much needed changes will add up to is gameplay by the bucket load (which the original severely lacked) and a soundtrack by legendary axe-man Brian "Bubble-head" May, including the track "Cyborg" (again, which was also originally promised to accompany the first release, but was omitted). The sequel will also feature amazin' cut scenes a-plenty and will be promoted by an ad campaign bigger than ever.

There's also already talk of a *Rise 3D* in the offing. And although not planned for release until much later next year, it is said that it might just be not too unlike a texture-mapped, polygoned *Virtua Fighter* – purportedly, with knobs on!

(Below) "Now where did I put my brasso?"



Micro Machines 2

Codemasters has recently been extolling the virtues of the really rather wonderful *Micro Machines 2*.

As smooth as a proverbial baby's posterior, it's fast and furious fun at its fastest and furthest! Up to four players can play simultaneously (two using joypads and two using the keyboard) and from what we've seen so far, this will be the game that you want to play after a night down the pub with your mates.

But that's not all, oh no! The programmers (Supersonic) are currently putting the final touches to a rather splendid game editor that will allow players to change just about anything and everything; the cars, the way they look and handle, the backgrounds, the tracks, the obstacles, even the weather, and then you can save them all for posterity or give them to all your mates and throw down the gauntlet. The game editor is apparently very easy to use, and the designers reckon that even the biggest technophobe will be able to build a track within 20 minutes.

MM2 is due for release in June.



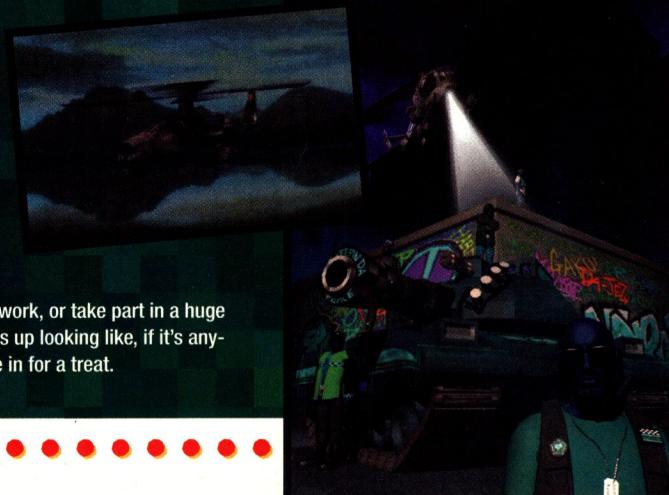
Battlezone Returns Shock!

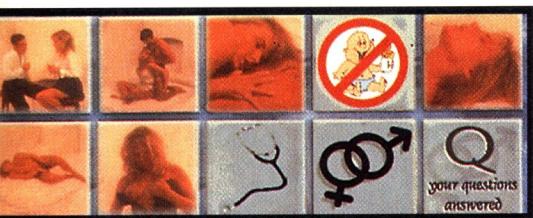
Core Design is getting up to speed after a bit of a quiet period and has just released details of its new 3D tank blaster, *Shellshock!*

Based on the brilliantly playable, arcade classic *Battlezone*, it brings the game bang up to date with undulating, fractal-mapped 3D terrains and Silicon Graphics-generated vehicles. The game uses the familiar first-person perspective to transport the player right to the heart of the action, and as the game progresses, players will be given the opportunity to upgrade the armour and firepower of their tank to improve its performance.

Players will also be able to go head-to-head over a network, or take part in a huge assault on enemy installations. Whatever *Shellshock!* ends up looking like, if it's anything like the old Atari classic in terms of gameplay, we're in for a treat.

Shellshock! is due for release in August.





(Left) Full frontal nudity and some rather graphic sex scenes - all in the name of sex education you understand.

The Pleasure's all mine

TELSTAR IS PROUD to present what it cunningly describes as "The unique new interactive sex guide for PC CD-ROM". (Just so the story works, we'll assume that the people at Telstar are rather blinkered and have never heard of *The Joy of Sex* on CD-ROM from Philips.)

The unique *Pleasures of Sex* is a unique guide to long-term sexual satisfaction that includes unique "chapters" on body language, masturbation, oral sex and orgasms, all wonderfully discussed in intimate detail and illustrated with copious stills and FMV of couples getting down to it. The unique "guide" runs under QuickTime version 2 and promises to be the best

quality yet seen on a pc. For those who can't stand the flicker and want it full screen, there are also plans for unique MPEG and CD-i versions, which will follow soon after the unique main product is released in June.

Contact Telstar on 01932 222 232 for further details.



Death of the 486

Just a short while ago a 486DX66 was considered to be the ultimate gaming system of the moment. Everyone knew that the well publicised Pentium was coming (you couldn't buy a machine that didn't have "Pentium Ready" plastered all over it), but that didn't stop people splashing out around one and a half grand on a 486DX66 with 4 Meg of RAM and a dual-speed CD-ROM drive. Now, only 12 months later, Intel has confirmed that it expects to halt production of 486SX and 486DX chips before the autumn, and cut back 486DX2 and DX4 production to a bare minimum by the end of the year. The DX4 chip is expected to remain in production slightly longer however, and will continue to be used in lap tops as it is considered more energy efficient than the current Pentium range, although it too is expected to be phased out later next year.

Other manufacturers claim they will remain faithful to the 486 until the end of the year however, and see Intel's decision to focus on the 75MHz Pentium as an entry level machine as somewhat premature. Compaq, for example, expects over 60 per cent of its second quarter sales to be 486s, although it too predicts that in the second half of the year, as Intel starts to push the 133MHz Pentium and P6 chips, it will ultimately force the DX4 out of the picture completely by 1996, forcing other companies to follow suit as the "entry level" machine threshold is pushed even higher.

Pentium Beater

INTEL has just revealed details of its successor to the Pentium chip, and make the claim that it is twice as fast as its predecessor.

Imaginatively named P6, the chip is a CISC/RISC hybrid which is designed to break free from the performance limitations of the ancient x86 PC architecture, while simultaneously maintaining backward compatibility. Intel claims the new architecture, when it is combined with a revolutionary new on-chip secondary cache, will lead to a 100 per cent rise in PC performance by the end of '95.

The five and a half million transistor P6 chip will run at around 133MHz and is claimed by Intel to be almost twice as fast as a 100MHz Pentium. The increase in performance is largely due to what Intel terms as "dynamic execution", a new innovation, which actually means the chip looks ahead at the software it is running and predicts what the next instructions will be. These predictions are then optimised and passed on to the processor before they are actually requested.

The new system operates in conjunction with a 256K on-chip cache of speedy SRAM and shares a dedicated bus with the CPU (and therefore operates at the same speed).

The price you will have to pay for this improved performance is that MCM's (Multi Chip Modules) are expensive to manufacture, so we can expect prices to be pretty high when the first P6 system is released later this year.

In the meantime, Intel has just launched its new 120MHz Pentium processor, which it claims will reassert the Pentium brand in terms of performance and reliability after the embarrassing "Pentium Bug" scare. A 150MHz version is expected to debut later this year.

Intel is also pushing its 100MHz machine as the next standard for multimedia PC's in an attempt to hold on to its massive market share. However, despite renewed confidence and a massive consumer campaign, with rival chip designers, NexGen, Cyrix and AMD, starting to flex their collective muscles, this could be interpreted as a last ditch effort by Intel to uphold its current monopoly.

Expect to see some very competitive deals over the next six months, especially as Intel starts to phase out 486 chip production.

DISPATCHES

+++ WATERWORLD

Interplay has secured the rights to the much hyped forthcoming Costner megabucks epic, *Waterworld*.

The film, which ran into financial and production problems while filming in Hawaii last year, reputedly earned Costner a hefty \$15 million fee and features some of the largest sets ever constructed. Dennis Hopper also stars, along with a vast cast of extras, and the film, which is being billed as one of the most expensive films ever, is due for release this summer.

Little is known about the game, although it's believed it will be a vast multi-platform epic, not a million miles away from a *Dune*-type strategy game and not a platform game - hoorah!

+++ SCREAMER

Virgin have been showing off a rather smart looking *Ridge Racer* clone that's been developed by the same chaps who worked on *Iron Assault*. Looking totally Pats 'n' Ed (Absolutely Fabulous Darhling!) in the graphics department, phased onlookers reportedly uttered that it (gasp!) looked even better than the highly acclaimed aforementioned arcade racer. *Screamer* is due for release later in the year.

+++ QUAD SPEED SONY

Sony has just announced the release of two top-notch quad-speed CD-ROM drives. Available with a SCSI interface, or what the company describes as an ATAPI (AT Attachment Packet Interface) for easy Plug & Play installation, Sony guarantees to relieve you from the tedium of chug-chug drives forever. Prices start from around £119. Contact Sony on 0181 760 0500 for more info.



+++ DAWN PATROL

Rowan is currently planning to release a beefed up version of the smash hit *Dawn Patrol*, which will enable players to battle it out head-to-head over a network or modem.

Whether they intend to include new scenarios and possibly a mission-based career option is still uncertain, although sources have hinted that this is a distinct possibility. What we can expect, however, are an enhanced enemy AI, improved flight dynamics and more high-speed drivers, which will enable the game to run more efficiently than before.

The Charts

Key

- ▲ Higher position than last month.
 - ▼ Lower position than last month.
 - ◆ Same position as last month.
 - New Entry
 - RE Re-Entry

GALLUP CHARTS

What's selling really well at the moment then? Not always what you'd think. Despite what we say in our incredibly informative and exceptionally witty reviews, it still seems that you lot aren't sitting up and paying attention. Some of you obviously have a masochistic desire to waste money...

Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. Frontier: 1st Encounters	●	Gametek
2. Sim City 2000	▼	Maxis
3. Overlord	▼	Virgin
4. Discworld	▲	Psygnosis
5. TIE Fighter	▲	LucasArts
6. Premier Manager 3	▼	Gremlin Interactive
7. All New World of Lemmings	▲	Psygnosis
8. Fantasy Manager	RE	Arc
9. Microsoft Flight Simulator V.5	RE	Microsoft
10. The Lion King	▲	Virgin
11. Rise of the Robots	▲	Mirage/Time Warner
12. Doom 2	▼	Virgin
13. NASCAR	▲	Virgin
14. Colonization	▼	MicroProse
15. Rise of the Triad	▼	US Gold/Apogee
16. FIFA International Soccer	▲	Electronic Arts
17. Mavis Beacon 2 (UK Edition)	▲	Mindscape
18. TIE Fighter: Defender of Empire	▼	LucasArts
19. X-COM Terror of the Deep	▼	MicroProse
20. Theme Park	▼	Bullfrog

Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Desert Strike	▲	Gremlin Interactive
2. Winter Olympics	▲	US Gold
3. Star Trek: 25th Anniversary	▲	Interplay
4. Descent Demo Disk	▲	Interplay
5. Lottery (win)	▲	VCI Software
6. Formula 1 Grand Prix	RE	Powerplus
7. Hired Guns	▲	Psygnosis
8. Dune 2	RE	Hit Squad
9. Space Hulk	▼	Hit Squad
10. Monkey Island 2	▼	Kixx

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Frontier: 1st Encounters	●	Psygnosis
2. Discworld	▼	Psygnosis
3. Dark Forces	▼	LucasArts
4. TFX	▼	Ocean/D.I.D.
5. Dragon Lore	◆	Mindscape
6. Bioforge	RE	Electronic Arts
7. Doom 2	▼	Virgin
8. Rise of the Robots	RE	Mirage/Time Warner
9. Temptation	RE	Beau-Jolly
10. Magic Carpet	RE	Bullfrog



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Bulletin

Psygnosis Have it all Sewn Up



Krazy Ivan

It seems that every publisher worth its weight in SIMM's has released, or is planning to release, a stomp about, *Mech Warrior*-ish, shoot 'em up game, and you'll be pleased to hear that Psyggy are no exception.

Looking even better in the graphics department than the forthcoming *Mech Warrior 2* from Activision and Sierra's highly rated *MetalTech: Earthsiege*, the amusingly titled *Krazy Ivan* is full of huge, texture-mapped, polygoned robots, armed to the teeth with assorted rockets, lasers and machine guns.

Although it's not going to score much in the originality stakes, recent rumours indicate that it will be mission based (like *Earthsiege*) and have the option of going head-to-head over a network (like *Battledrome*) and is rather spectacular all round.

Players will be able to construct their own HERC, load up various weapon configurations and stomp about over various landscapes. Psyggy also reckon that its game, unlike all the others, will not be set on a flat landscape, but will feature hills and craters to hide in and behind. This was decided on after criticism from the HERC Battle Re-enactment Society, which claimed that if the landscape is always flat, you may as well stick to tanks and caterpillar tracks.

Krazy Ivan is due for release on the PC in September.

Demolish 'Em Derby

Gettin' Far from being just another driving game that sports remarkably realistic cars and tracks, *Demolish 'Em Derby* (DED) finally addresses the demands of most driving game fans by positively encouraging drivers to ram each other off the track.

Sporting graphics that wouldn't be required to tug at their forelocks in deference to anything yet seen on the PC, DED

Gone are the days of old when Psygnosis was a by-word for graphic gloss and Lemmings (well almost). Arise Sir Psyggy, game developer extraordinaire, defender of lush graphics and gameplay for the next millennium.



will feature more tracks than a *House Martins* album and will be fully networkable for true multi-player bashing sessions. The idea, of course, is to win the race, but players will be expected to trash their cars, making death defying lunges at fellow competitors at every turn or face being relegated to the namby NASCAR school of Sunday drivers.

Demolish 'Em Derby is due for release on the PC in October.

Wipeout

Yet another racing game, but this time set in the future and featuring superbly slick racing craft. If *Wipeout* plays as good as it looks then we're in for a good time.

Although the game will include a combat option (*a la Slipstream*) players will ultimately have to rely on pure speed and stealth to thwart the opposition. The general consensus is to make it as fast as they can, keep the level of detail as high as possible and get the learning curve spot on with tracks that challenge, but don't prove too impossible at the 16th attempt.

Wipeout is due for release in December.

Darker

The most immediate release of the current crop, *Darker* is a fly-by-night and shoot-things game, not a million miles away from Ocean's *Inferno*.

Featuring super-smooth (well they are on a P90) graphics and some wicked animation, it's a combat sim for the 21st century. Players fly their stylishly modelled Caero hover ship thing around (pretty) detailed landscapes, shooting other stylishly modelled craft, and crashing spectacularly into the ground if they don't fly near and often enough to the special energy giving beacons dotted about the landscape. You can zip underground too, if the fancy takes



(Top left) *Krazy Ivan* looks set to stomp all over the long awaited *Mech Warrior 2* from Activision.

(Top centre) *Demolish 'Em Derby* should scare the pants off all *Ridge Racer* addicts.

(Top right) *Wipe Out* - not a surfing game at all, but another futuristic racing game with some rather neat combat bells and whistles.

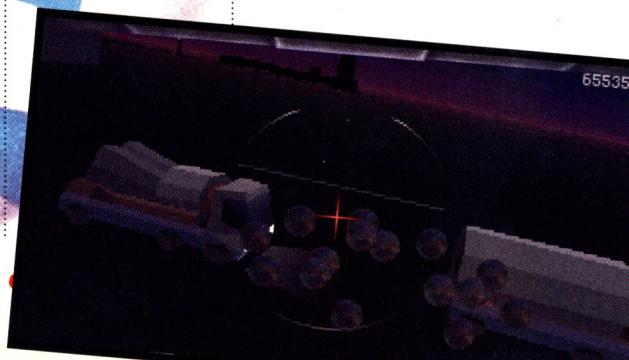
you, and rumour has it there will be three different ships to choose from and a range of six very different weapons to use against the nasty Halons.

The fact that it all looks so polished and console-like (the explosions and smoke are not made up of wishy-washy translucent pixels as they usually are on the PC, but carefully chiselled smoke "balls" that spin and turn in a very precise manner) is probably due to Psygnosis developing most of its new titles for the PC and the Sony PlayStation concurrently. The good news is that most of the releases will be simultaneous and if early rumours are anything to go by, the PC stuff will stand up favourably against the new Sony "super console" in terms of speed and graphics.

Psygnosis is developing stuff exclusively for the PSX (such as *GPolice* and *Assault Run*), although it is likely that PC conversions will follow if they are successfully received on the PSX. Most of the new development, however, will continue to be on both platforms (both *Sentient* and *Spawn* will be released on the PC and PSX for example, and due out in September). Good news for PC and PSX owners alike.

Darker is due for release on the PC in August.

Contact Psygnosis on 0151 709 5755.



COVER DISK

Our cover disks are "absolutely chockers!" this month. Not only have we got an exclusive demo of the brilliant *Jagged Alliance*, but a CD-ROM packed with the latest in computer gaming fun.

HD Installation

MAKE THE DRIVE containing your floppy current by typing, for example, "A:". Then type "PCZONE" to install *Jagged Alliance* onto your hard drive.

Jagged Alliance (Mindscape)

An isometric strategy game, great for all budding megalomaniacs who love to control people and send them to their doom.

Point and click to command your troops (think back to *Cannon Fodder*, but in this game you can keep tabs on the attributes of each member in your team). Spread out and keep your heads down!

Controls

Serial/PS/2 mouse
Tab Wide screen
F1-F6 Select mercenary (double press)
I Inventory
O Options
P Pause
A Abort
S Character sheet
D Done
C Compress Time
Ctrl&Click Search specific area

System requirements

DOS 3.1 or higher
386/25 or higher
VGA
4Mb RAM
Serial or PS/2 mouse
For more information contact Mindscape on 01444 246333.



CD-ROM Installation



FROM THE DOS PROMPT, type "D:" (presuming your drive letter is D) and then "PCZONE".

Use your mouse or the cursor keys to navigate up and down the menu and hit the return key to select.

Braindead 13 (Empire Interactive)

Another fine example of an interactive cartoon. This time you're cast as Lance Galahad, a young boy looking for some action (on the computer) who faces a life or death struggle with a brain from another planet. Guide Lance through this demo level and shutdown the Brain's network terminal.

Controls

See in-game menu for controls

System requirements

Double-speed CD-ROM
Windows 3.1
486 SX25 or higher
SVGA 640x480x256
For more information contact Empire Interactive on 0181 343 7337.

Apache Longbow (Digital Integration)

A sneak preview of the stunning new helicopter combat simulator from the makers of *Tornado* and *Merlin*.

For more information contact Digital Integration on 01444 246333.

The Last Dynasty (Sierra)

A lavish space simulator set against the backdrop of a classic space opera saga. This rolling demo shows just how well Windows games with live video and 3D animation can work.

System requirements

Double-speed CD-ROM
Windows 3.1
486 SX25 or higher
SVGA 640x480x256
You will need Video for Windows installed
For more information contact Sierra Online on 01734 303322.

HELP!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PCs just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171 917 7693
Any week day between 11am and 6pm. (DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible i.e. System type, sound card, RAM etc., plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.



Tower Assault (Team 17)

Game over, man! No way! The Alien Breed returns to infest a tower near you. Same idea as before – watch your feet they're coming from the floor!

Controls

Cursor keys to move	
Alt.	Retreat
Ctrl.	Fire
P-	Pause

System requirements

DOS 3.1 or higher
386/25 or higher
VGA
4Mb RAM
Serial or PS/2 mouse

For more information contact Team 17 on 01924 201846.

Kingdom – The Far Reaches (Interplay)

Tis a goodly quest thou will undertake – if you're that way inclined. Kingdom is an interactive cartoon. It's Dragon's Lair, say you. Yet this doth give you far more control over your character and events that befall him.

Controls

Mouse

System requirements

Double speed CD-ROM
DOS 3.1 or higher
486 SX25 or higher
VGA



TROUBLESHOOTING

If you experience a problem, the first thing to do is check out the README.TXT files. This will give you in-depth information on the demo. To do this, type:

Edit readme.txt

If you still have difficulties the following troubleshooting tips may help.

Amnesia?

The most common problem that you'll hit while running any of the demos is a memory problem. Some programs require EMS others XMS, and your PC's configuration needs to be altered accordingly. To change the system you will need to edit your CONFIG.SYS in DOS. To do this, go to the C drive by typing:

C:

CD\

Edit Config.sys

You should then look for a line that reads Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe (if not there then type this in under the first line). You should then add an extra bit that will depend on which set up you require:

For EMS

The line should read:

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM

For XMS

The line should read:

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS

You are advised to keep the EMS setting as a default. If you have DOS 6.0 or higher you can type Memmaker at the DOS prompt and say "yes" to EMS if required or "no" if XMS is needed. Remember that some games can require up to 590k free base memory.

Boot Disk

If you are still having problems then the next step is to make a boot disk. If you are using DOS 6.0 or lower then follow the following steps:

Put a floppy in your A: drive and type:

Format A:/S

This will erase all data on the diskette so use one that is no longer needed. When the disk has finished formatting, change to your A: drive. Type the following lines at the A prompt:

Copy con config.sys <Enter>

Dos=High <Enter>

Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys <Enter>

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM <Enter>

(Or Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS if XMS is required.)

Then add the lines for the sound card and CD-ROM drive in the same manner. (You can get these lines by looking at the original CONFIG.SYS on the C drive). Once finished press:

F6 <Enter>

You should see the message "1 file(s) copied." If the message does not appear, please follow the instructions again.

IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Next, type the following lines at the A: prompt:

Copy Con Autoexec.bat <Enter>

Prompt \$p\$g <Enter>

All sound card and CD-ROM drive lines

You can find these command lines in the AUTOEXEC.BAT on the C drive. They may look similar to this:

Set Blaster=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 T6

Set Sound=C:\SB16

Please note that these lines *may* look like this. Check your own AUTOEXEC.BAT beforehand. Once you have completed this, press F6, and again you should see message "1 file(s) copied." If the message does not appear please follow the instructions again.

IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Once you have done this, with the disk in drive A, press <Ctrl><Alt><Delete> keys together to reboot.

Clean Boot

If you have DOS 6.2 or higher you should reboot your computer. When you get the message "Starting MS-DOS", hit the F8 key at the top of the keyboard. You will see the message "DOS will prompt you to confirm each CONFIG.SYS command". Say yes to the following lines:

DOS=High

Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys

Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM (Or NOEMS)

The relevant sound and CD drivers
Say no to the rest of your lines until you are asked to process your AUTOEXEC.BAT. Say yes to this line and the following:

Prompt \$p\$g

Path C:\Windows; C:\DOS

Also say yes to all sound card and CD-ROM drivers. Say no to everything else. This should sort things out.

*If you are still having problems, then give Miles a call on 0171 917 7693.
(But NEVER before 11.00am.)*

Important

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware, and as such are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated versions, extra levels, junk mail and loads of other stuff (probably).

All of these CDs and HDs have been virus checked; HOWEVER, neither PC Zone, Dennis Publishing nor any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from using this disk.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

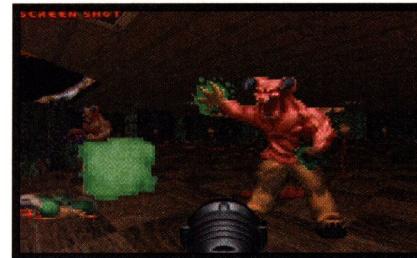
COVER DISK

CD-ROM *Installation continued*

This CD was prepared on a Plasmon CD recorder. For more information contact Relection Systems Ltd on: 01763 26296



Plasmon



4Mb RAM

Serial or PS/2 mouse

For more information contact Interplay on 01235 821666.

Ultimate Soccer Manager (Impressions)

Can you manage to get Chesterfield F.C. to the premier division? You have sure got your work cut out in this sound football management game. Work out your marketing strategy for merchandising and keep the bank manager on your side.

It would help, of course, if you came top of the league.

Controls

Mouse

System requirements

DOS 3.1 or higher

386 SX25 or higher

VGA

4Mb RAM

For more information contact Impressions on 0171 351 2133.



MULTIMEDIA

P.B. Bear's Birthday Party (Dorling Kindersley)

Follow this bear and learn on the way. This rolling demo starts, which gives an insight into the lifestyle of a plantigrade mammal.

System requirements

Double-speed CD-ROM

Windows 3.1

386 DX or higher

VGA

Contact DK on 0171 753 3488.

The Pleasures of Sex (Telstar)

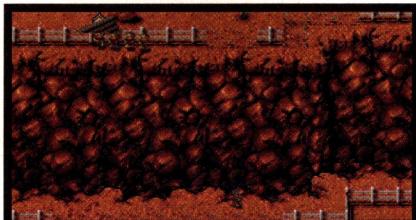
All you wanted to know about sex, but were too embarrassed to buy the video. Quicktime for Windows must be installed by installing CD-ROM Magazine interactive.

System requirements

Double-speed CD-ROM

Windows 3.1

Quicktime for Windows



NO CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

**Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (28), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing,
19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ**

Your Details (Please print clearly):

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (NEVER before 11.00am) on: 0171 917 7693

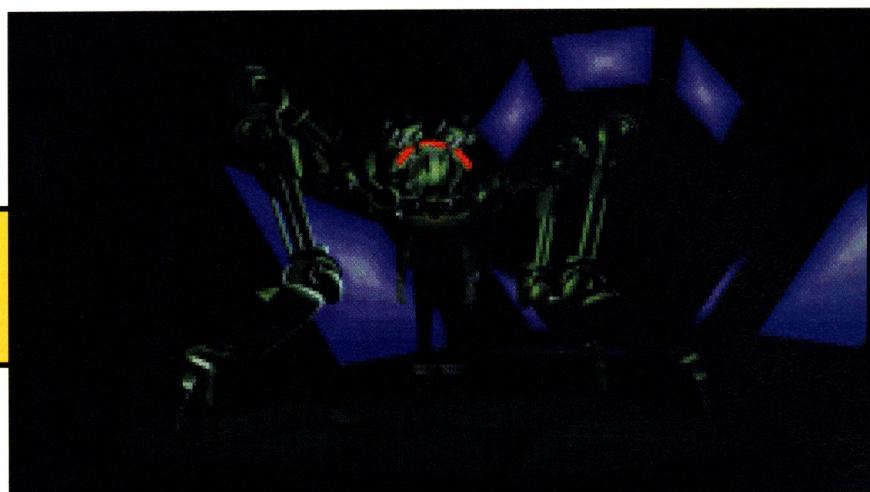
MACHINE SPECIFICATION

Most of the games on the CD-ROM will run comfortably on a 486SX with 4Mb RAM with a double-speed CD-ROM drive, and are SoundBlaster compatible. If in doubt, consult the README.TXT file in the game directory.

Some of the more graphically demanding games may require a faster processor and 8Mb RAM to run satisfactorily, although you may be able to get them to work on a slower machine by adjusting the detail levels.

Please be aware that different games require different memory setups. For details on how to configure your machine correctly consult the **HELP!** section or ring the reader helpline.





move, right button to fire.

System Shock (Electronic Arts)

We called it "Diehard in space", but please forgive us. What we meant to say was that it was a bit like *Doom*, but had a much stronger strategy-based theme, which required you to think as well as shoot.

Rumour has it *System Shock 2* isn't that far around the corner, so this brilliant demo should bring you up to speed.

The game is MOUSE controlled, and you can access a full list of controls via the in-game options menu.

Descent (Interplay)

The brilliant tunnel-twistin' *Doom*-buster from Interplay took 3D action games to new heights when it was released earlier this year. When you play this huge demo (originally released as shareware) you'll see

what we mean.

Try going head-to-head over a network for the ultimate in shoot 'em up fun.

The game can be played with either your KEYBOARD, JOYSTICK or MOUSE (or a combination of two).

Access the README.TXT file or the in-game menu for a complete list of controls.

Jazz Jack Rabbit (Epic)

Probably one of the best platform games ever to emerge on the PC. This demo is living proof that the PC can cope with sideways scrolling just as well as any machine out there - and there's sound and animation to match.

The game can be played with either your KEYBOARD or a JOYSTICK.

Access the in-game menu to select your control method.

Christmas Lemmings (Psygnosis)

Only 177 shopping days 'til Christmas, so load up this brilliant festive *Lemmings* cash-in and hope and pray your Aunty Mavis doesn't buy you the full version for Christmas, especially when 3D *Lemmings* is just around the corner.

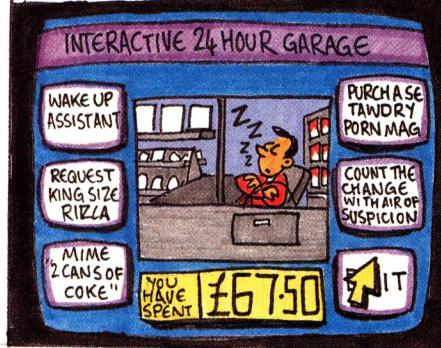
Christmas Lemmings is MOUSE controlled.

Access the README.TXT file in the Lemmings directory for further information. ☐

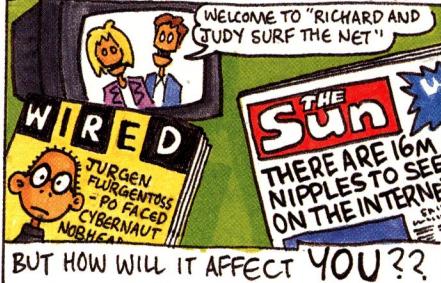


WHAT WILL THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION MEAN TO YOU

IT WILL ALSO BE POSSIBLE TO GO SHOPPING WITHOUT LEAVING YOUR ARMCHAIR... INTERACTIVE "VIRTUAL STORES" WILL BE ONLINE 24 HOURS A DAY...



EVERYWHERE YOU GO, ON THE PAGES OF EVERY NEWSPAPER, IN EACH AND EVERY TV BROADCAST, AND IN THE BACKROOMS OF EVERY ILLEGAL AFTER-HOURS DRINKING DEN IN THE WORLD, EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT THE "FORTH COMING DIGITAL REVOLUTION..."



BUT HOW WILL IT AFFECT YOU??

FOR ONE THING, COMMUNICATIONS WILL UNDERGO MASSIVE CHANGE. AS TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES, PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK TO YOU VIA A REAL-TIME VIDEO LINK, AT ANY TIME, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE...

COO-EE! STEVE! IT'S YER DEAR OLD MUM HERE!



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES WILL BE A THING OF THE PAST. ALL SEXUAL CONTACT WILL TAKE PLACE IN A "VIRTUAL" FORM...



LIVE ACTION FOOTBALL™

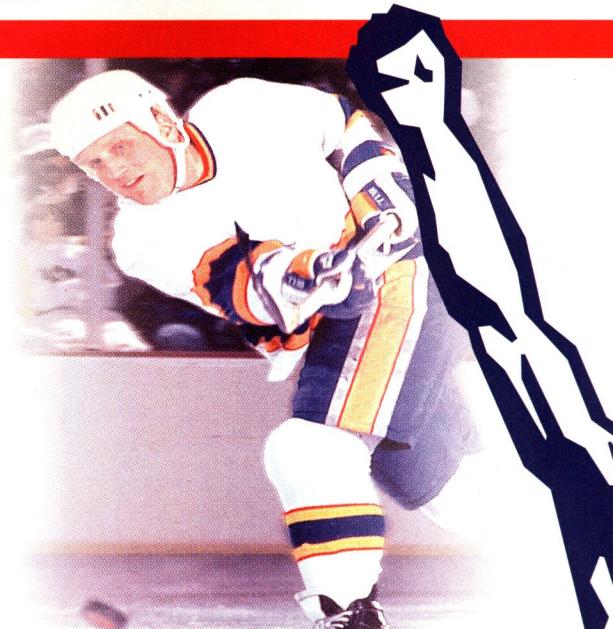
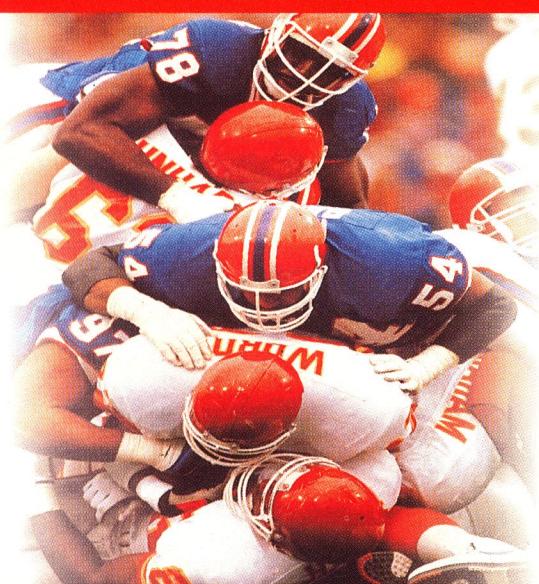
Real video means this game looks and feels just like a televised football game. You're on the side lines coaching 52 of the greatest players from the NFL. Make the coaching decisions and your strategy lives or dies, in full-colour digital video. If you're looking for the ultimate in football action and realism, this is your call.

- Television-style original video footage
- 52 of the greatest NFL players
- Realistic graphics • Artificial Intelligence

BRETT HULL HOCKEY '95™

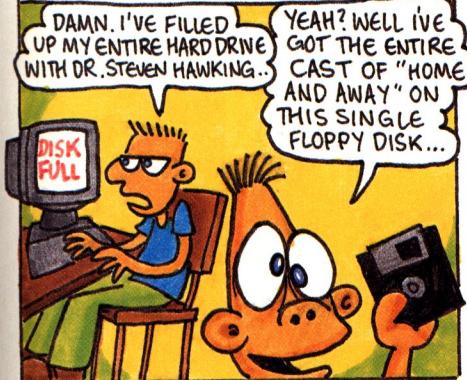
Now it's time to get into the action with the players, the hits, and the blistering shots that make hockey the quickest sport in the world. Now it's time to lace 'em up with Brett Hull Hockey '95™.

- Brett Hull and 600 NHLPA greats on ice
- Customise team attributes
- Check the instant replays
- Keep track of the players' stats
- 1 or 2 player modes

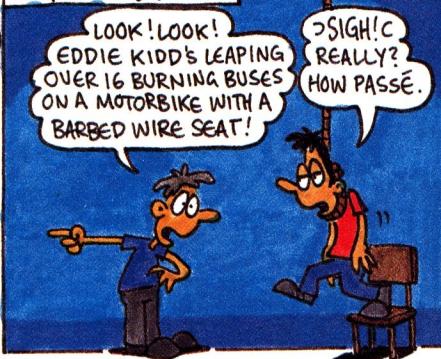


FOR GAMES AS REAL

EVENTUALLY, IT SHOULD EVEN BE POSSIBLE TO DOWNLOAD ALL THE INFORMATION IN THE HUMAN MIND ONTO A COMPUTER...



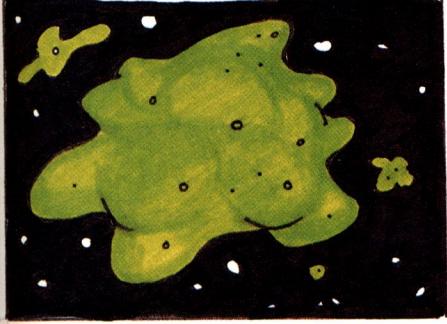
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ARE FAR-REACHING. WE WILL NO LONGER FEAR DEATH, SINCE OUR MINDS WILL LIVE ON IN A DIGITAL FORM...



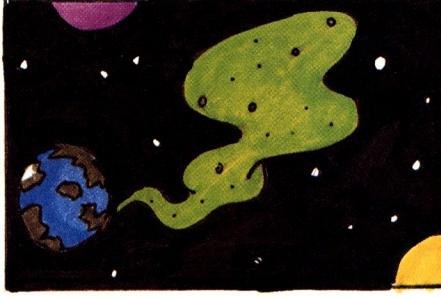
OUR PHYSICAL BODIES WILL BECOME INTER-CHANGEABLE. SCIENTISTS MAY EVEN INVENT NEW, IMPROVED PHYSICAL FORMS FOR US TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF...



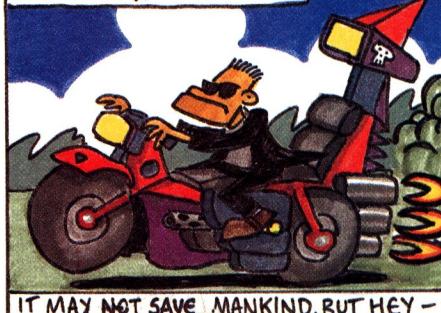
THE ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT? TO FUSE OUR COLLECTED MINDS TOGETHER INTO ONE HUGE, FLOATING, GASEOUS CONSCIOUSNESS - A SINGLE AMORPHIC BEING, CONSTRUCTED FROM A BILLION WORLDLY INTELLECTS...



THEN, AND ONLY THEN, WILL WE BE READY TO ESCAPE THE CONFINES OF EARTH - TO TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY, SEEKING OUT NEW LIFEFORMS, AND SPREADING A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND PEACE THAT WILL UNITE THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE...



ON THE OTHER HAND, WE COULD ALWAYS USE ALL THIS HIGH-TECH HOO-HAH TO INVENT A TOTALLY GNARLY NEW KIND OF KILLER MOTORBIKE...



IT MAY NOT SAVE MANKIND, BUT HEY - IT'D BE FAR COOLER.

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS '95

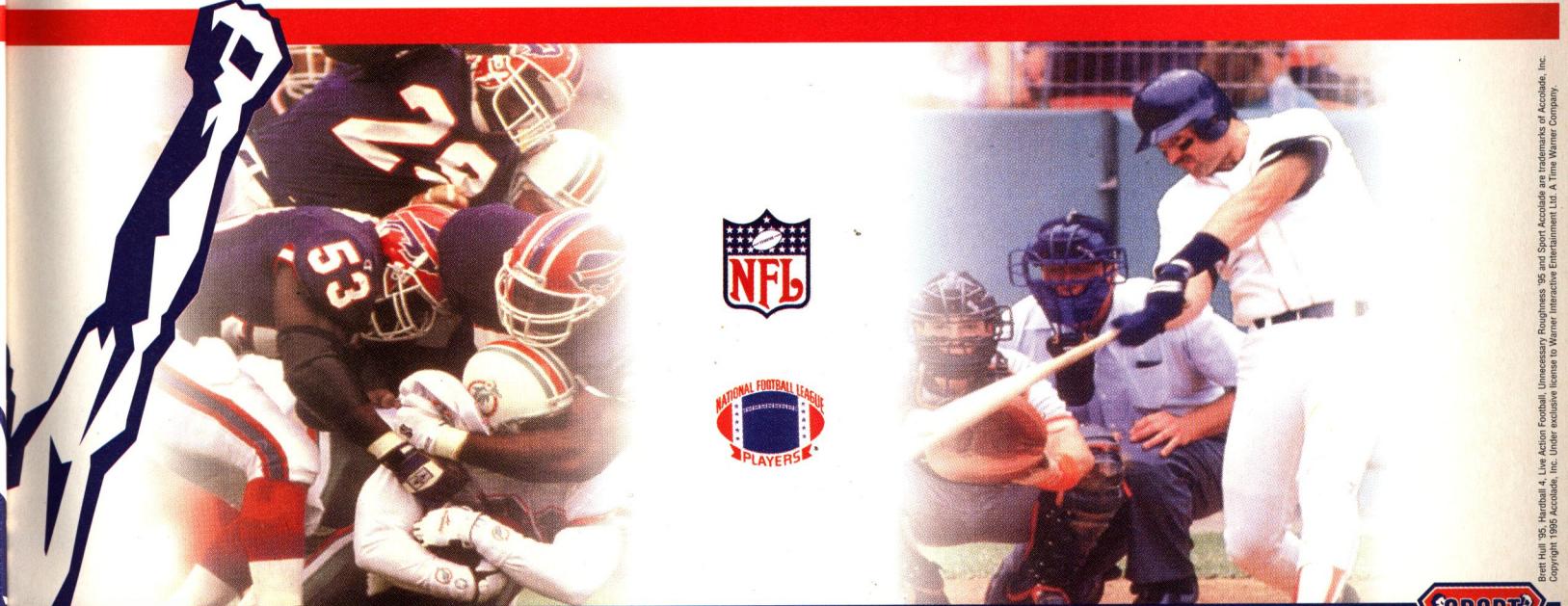
You'll take it to the crunch time with over 1400 NFL stars busting across the screen. Strategy, trading, play-by-play, and action so intense, your head will spin. When you play football with the pros, it gets pretty rough.

- Actual NFL teams • 3-D modelled players
- Customise viewing with Infinity Cam™
- Design your own playbook
- Super VGA graphics • 1 or 2 players

HARD BALL 4

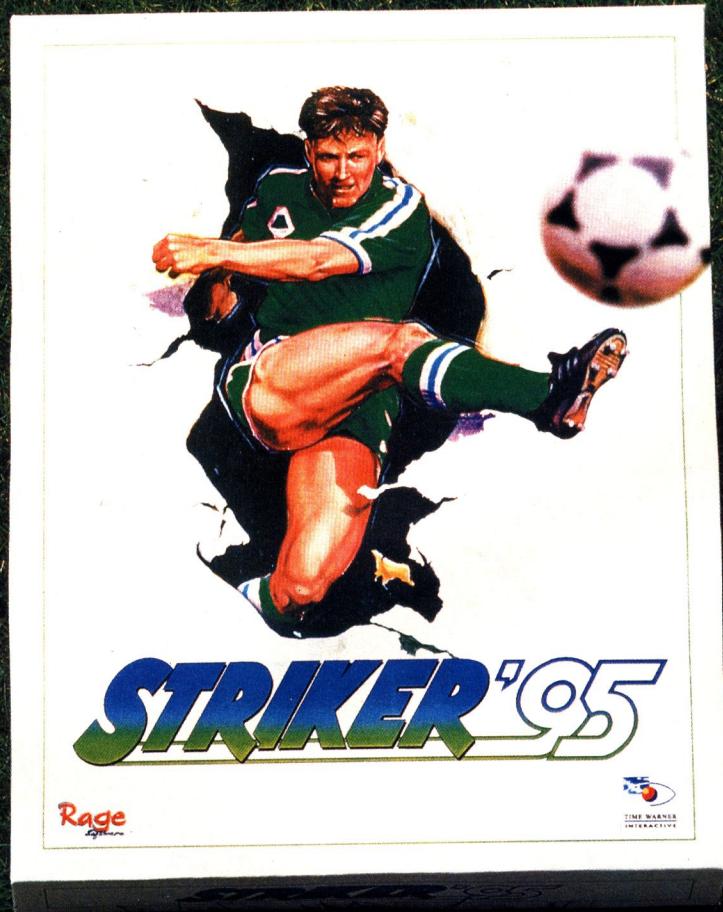
The only perfect game. Baseball. HardBall 4™ is stacked with 28 realistic ballparks with varying field conditions, complete stats and thrilling play-by-play commentary. From the dugouts to the fence, it's as close to perfect as you can get.

- Brush up on your skills in batting and pitching
- Fine-tune your player attributes
- Select your choice of viewing perspective
- Instant replay mode
- Superb player graphics



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So get ready for the most impressive début of the season. It'll be unmissable!

- The latest version of the top-selling Striker series. ■ 'Rotoscoped' player animations give fluid and highly realistic movements
- Scaling player 'Sprites' within a full 3-D environment ■ Team and player edit facilities can create a 'Dream Team' ■ Authentic stadium atmosphere ■ Expert match commentary from Andy Gray ■ Save-game options ■ Over 5000 players - each with individual characteristics ■ Features over 300 national and international teams

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STAR TREK

After last month's mega-stonking exclusive review of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, we can now offer you some awesome Trekkie goodies in the shape of standees, games and Trek-monster merchandise.

WIN!



WORTH
OVER
£600!



If you want to get your hands on more than £600 worth of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* stuff, which includes toys, books and games, all you have to do is answer the four simple questions below and send your answers in on a postcard with your name and address to us here at Dennis Publishing. All correct entries will then automatically be entered into our special prize draw and the winner will be sent loads of Trekky goodies AND a copy of the 95 per cent PC Zone Classic, *Star Trek: The Next Generation: A Final Unity* courtesy of Spectrum HoloByte and Microprose.

Question 1

The bloke who looks like he has a cornish pasty cellotaped to his forehead is called:

- A Mr Warp
- B Mr Worf
- C Mr Wart

Question 2

Patrick Stewart, that renowned follicley lacking person, has played all kinds of roles in the past few years, but which game did he voice-act for?

- A Frontier: First Encounters
- B Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
- C Lands of Lore

Question 3

What is the name of the new Star Trek series which has just started in the USA?

- A Star Trek: Voyager
- B Star Trek: Again
- C Oh No! More Star Trek

Question 4

What is the Star Fleet file number for space station Deep Space Nine?

- A QXT-143
- B NCC 1701-D
- C CR2D2

Please send your entries on a stuck down envelope, postcard or sub-space transmission to:

Baldly (oops) Boldly Going
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing,
19 Bolsover Street
London W1P 7HJ

Please note the closing date is July 31st 1995.

NB This competition is not open to any employee of Dennis Publishing, MicroProse or Speccy HoloByte, so don't even think about it, okay! All usual rules apply.

Blueprint

Scroll Defcon 5 Deadline Silverload

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0151 709 5755

RELEASE DATE: TBA

Millennium is going through a bit of real-time morphing. That is, it's changing from a software house into a development team and, according to Paul Rigby and Derek Dela Fuente, the change has done it a power of good.



If someone asked you to name a few Millennium games, you might mention the *James Pond* series, *Diggers*, *Pinkie* and possibly *Global Effect*. If that same someone then asked you to compare Millennium to the likes of Virgin, Electronic Arts, Sierra, Mindscape and such like, then you would probably say that Millennium is third-division material (with some justification). However, you may be surprised to learn that Millennium has finally come of age with its current crop of titles, which could elevate it to Premier League status.

Scroll

Scroll is a re-working of an old PC game, *Daughter of Serpents*. Whereas the latter game had nine plot lines, Scroll has been trimmed down to just two. It utilises Millennium's Chris Elliott-designed engine, SIGNOS (Scripted Interactive Graphic Novel Operating System), which incorporates moving icons, christened micons, and hypertext.

"SIGNOS allows you to follow one story

through one plot, but that story would have a different outcome if you played another character," explained Keith Smith, company PR man. "We have turned an old idea, which wasn't the most popular of games and took about 17 minutes to load, into an adventure/RPG for new users."

The game itself, seen from the player's point of view, takes place in Alexandria, Egypt, during the 1920s.

You play one of two characters: an Egyptologist or an Occultist - each with his own skills and independent plot - who comes across a scroll in a sarcophagus, which you have bought, but it cannot be identified. You take the scroll to a museum but, unfortunately for you and the world at large, the thing is stolen and it's later found out that it contains teachings from an ancient cult, which will bring evil gods from beneath the city to reap havoc everywhere. Nasty. This cult was an ancient tribe of serpent people who promised limitless

power in return for worshipping dark and terrible gods.

The scroll with the teachings of this race was lost for 2000 years until a drug dealer found a buried chamber full of them. He began selling them but took one from a gilded case (the one with the teachings inside) and you ended up buying it.

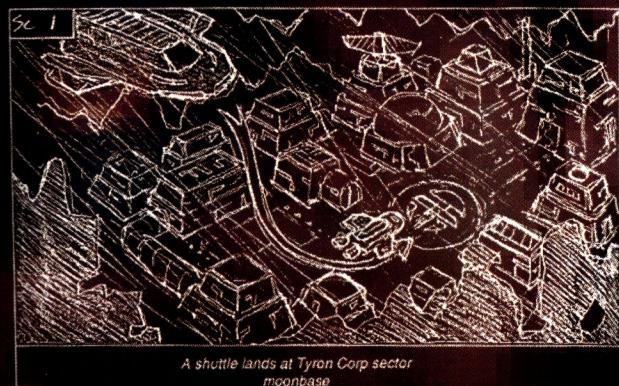
By exploring the mystical streets of Alexandria and other locations, talking to other colourful characters, examining and using objects and researching information, you must find out about the scroll and this strange cult, discover what they plan to do and find a way of stopping them.

The game is spread over 70 locations with three linked screens to allow communication and exploration."

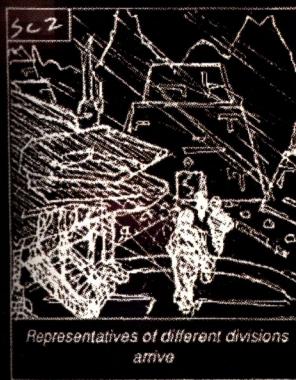
Chris Elliott has researched not only the historical background but the mythologic

(Right) Scroll: Ancient Cults... doncha just love 'em?

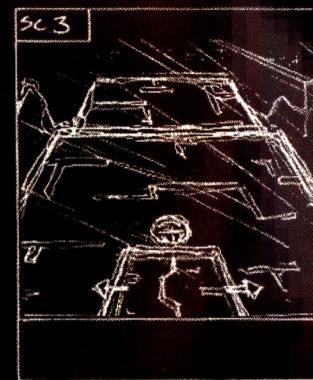




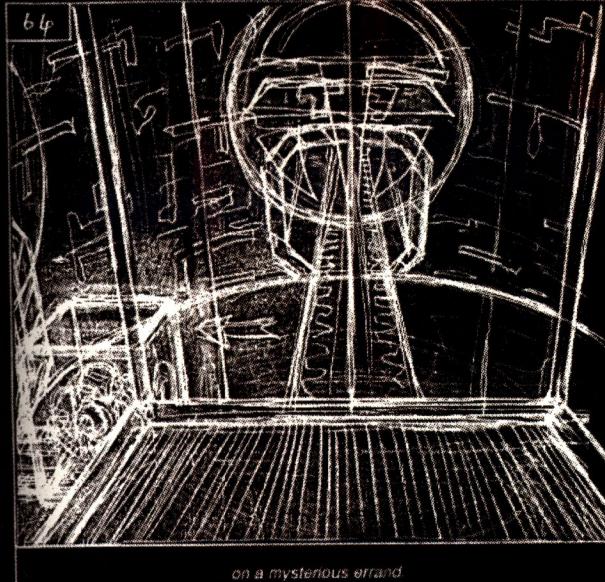
A shuttle lands at Tyron Corp sector moonbase



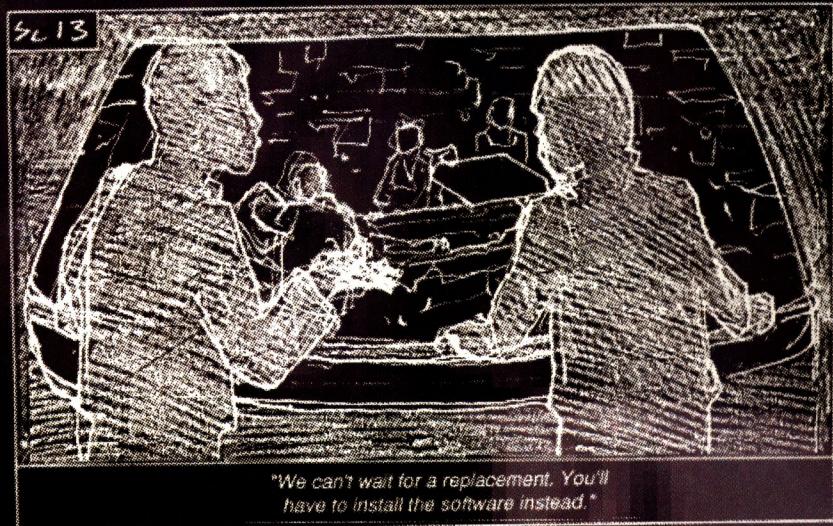
Representatives of different divisions arrive



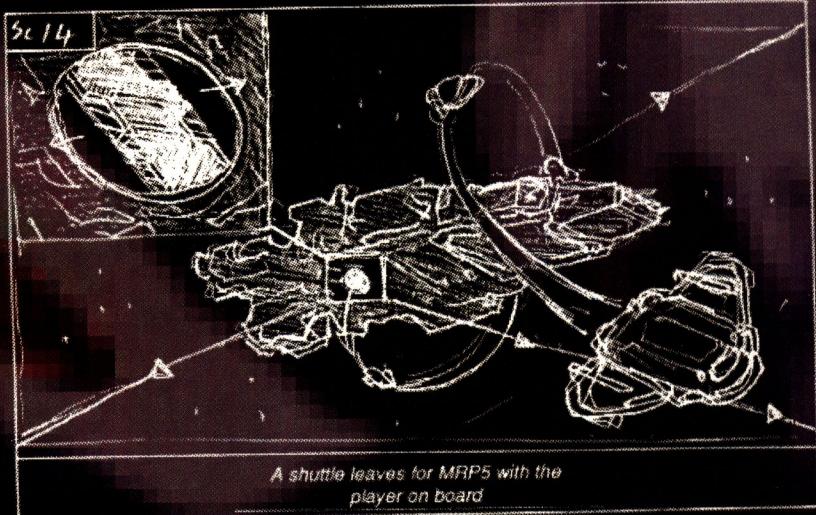
El



on a mysterious errand



"We can't wait for a replacement. You'll have to install the software instead."



A shuttle leaves for MRP5 with the player on board

one too, making *Scroll* as authentic looking as possible. For example, the hotel receptionist's name, Emil Gruber, is true of the time as there were a lot of Germans and Swiss in Egypt in the '20s.

Keith Smith again - "Our aim is to give a good adventure game to those people who want to try this type of thing but balk at the thought of paying £50 for something that they may not like. We're going to offer them 60 hours of play for £30. Hopefully, it will be a gentle introduction to the type of game that makes them want more. It is a different direction for us but there is only so much you can do with a platform game, which is what Millennium are known for."

Defcon 5

Defcon 5 (which is the scale from five to one of the American defence condition. Five is what it's at now, that's hunky-dory. One is,

(Above) *Defcon 5* - The already tasty graphics may be re-done using four Silicon Graphics machines.

well, you don't want to know really) is a space opera. The Tyron Corporation, which you work for, has the contract for the rights to deep-space mining, and also has secured the contract to defend the mining bases from alien attack. Now, after a time (quite a long time, actually) someone decides that, as no aliens have attempted a take-over, it may be worthwhile dismantling the defences. And who gets given the job? The Tyron Corporation (da da!)

You are sent to the planet MRP5 to install some relevant automatic defence software whilst the workforce zoom off on its holidays or something. However, the shuttle taking the workers away is destroyed by an unseen attacker. Your mission now, using a bit of initiative, is to link up all the planet's defences and find out why those workers have been attacked.

On your own, you have to decide whether to communicate with the outside, investigate or research what's going on. There are strategy elements in this game, such as when intruders from a crashed enemy ship find their way into the base and you have to assign targets to your droids.

Defcon 5 shows how far Millennium has advanced in graphics and storyline. It's been storyboarded from beginning to end "in house" and it could be possible that the already tasty graphics may be re-done as the company has recently taken delivery of four Silicon Graphics machines.

Deadline

Deadline has you in command of an elite hostage rescue team, using your skill and ingenuity to outwit terrorist leaders. It consists of 20 per cent action, 20 per cent management (gathering of information) and 60 per cent strategy using a 3D cut-away isometric view, similar to that found in *UFO*. If you move behind a wall, the wall is removed, leaving only doors and windows so you can see your characters. In a hostage situation you need to know the environment, what type of terrorists and their motives (political or religious ones will probably be suicidal), whilst those in it for the money won't kill themselves for the sake of a million pounds), hence a lot of the game is spent assessing the situation. As the game is real-time and not turn-based, you have to think ahead. If you need a helicopter it has to be ordered immediately as you may only have two hours to complete the mission and a chopper may take longer to reach you.

To get the authenticity of the game correct, an SO19 man was brought in (SO19 is the police equivalent of the SAS). The main aim of any hostage situation is to talk the terrorists out of any demands i.e. if they give you a 12 am deadline, your first priority is to talk them through that deadline. The attention to detail is all there. For instance, if a door opens the wrong way there will be no cover, and when that door is



open you only have a very narrow channel of sight. You have to move in to widen that line of sight.

Deadline will have 26 scenarios, ranging from tombs (where relics have to be protected), single buildings, atomic reactors and military installations. Missions will have to be completed, but this completion is to varying degrees in as much as you will always lose men and maybe even hostages, meaning less volunteers for your next assignment. Each end of level will give you a report on how you have performed.

Millennium is only putting *Deadline* on

CD-ROM because, as Keith Smith says, "It's very big game, even without flashy graphics and would need 12 or 13 discs, which is clearly far too many."

"The animated backgrounds give Silverload a very eerie feel..."

is the town of Silverload (I'm sure that should be "Silverlode"). A once prosperous mining town - there hasn't been any silver seen for years (Silverless?) - but a small community still survives. The mine was built on sacred Indian land, whose tribe had been massacred in opposing it and a

(Above) Silverload - a town of many secrets.

(Left) Silverload uses Millennium's SIGNOS system as its game engine.

(Below) The natives are not exactly what you'd call friendly.



curse has, subsequently, been placed upon the town. Now few people go there and those that do are never seen again (Milton Keynes?).

Silverload uses the SIGNOS point-and-click interface, making it enjoyable for all types of adventure/RPG enthusiasts. However, Millennium has decided to go for a gothic horror adventure using adult orientated graphics, so it's definitely an over-18s game.

Silverload is a full-screen, single-player, first-person game with you taking the part of a mean gunslinger who comes across a group of settlers who claim wolves killed their horses and that the people of Silverload have taken one of its children. The settlers offer to buy you a new horse if you find out what's going on and rescue the child. Going into town, you'll, hopefully, discover the dreadful secret and how it ties in with the settlers' past. You have to survive long enough to prevent the mysterious preacher from carrying out his sinister plan and spreading the evil that has, so far, been contained.

The adventure is pictorially described in the style of a graphic novel. The animated backgrounds give *Silverload* a very eerie feel on a par with the Clint Eastwood film: *Painted Desert*. In fact, Jason Wilson, writer and co-producer, could have gained his inspiration from that very film. □



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Blueprint

Sherrington Fox

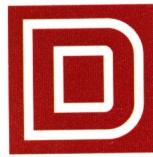
PUBLISHER: Psygnosis

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0151 709 5755

RELEASE DATE: August

Paul Rigby and Derek Dela Fuente take a look at *Sherrington Fox*, the fourth major title to come from Divide by Zero on the behalf of Psygnosis.



IVIDE BY ZERO, now 16 strong, has come a long way in the last two years following its successful *Innocent Until Caught* series. However, *Sherrington Fox* is its first major collaboration with the film industry. Take, for example, Alastair Graham, who has worked on Disney film animation and is currently working on *The Legend of Fa Mulan* for Disney. He is the character designer for *Sherrington Fox*. As well as being a film animator, Alastair has also illustrated two cartoon books and is currently trying to secure backing to have them turned into films. Another film industry connection is Sue Tong, the background artist for the program. Sue has worked on the Robin Williams film *The Thief and the Cobbler*, plus the Beatrix Potter animated series.

So how has Divide By Zero managed to grab such renowned technical people...?

It's who you know

"...It was purely the fact that our ideas are very strong," commented Andy demurely, "and the fact that we have good connections with a circle of people within the animation industry."

Because of their links with the animation film industry, Simon Lipowicz (the other half of the co-founding fathers) and Andy reciprocate by advising companies as to whether their books or films can be put onto multimedia and whether it will be perceived by the public to be good value or merely shovelware.

An indication, perhaps, of the growing interest in the computer sector from giant



companies that are in the movie and music industries.

"Working with the current crop of film animators on a game-by-game system works well for both sides, for, being in their own environment, they are keeping up with the latest animation techniques and their ideas stay fresh. Whereas a former Disney person moving over to the computer scene would soon lose sight of the current trends," asserted Andy.

The full story?

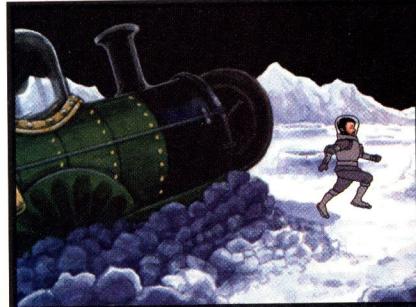
"Merely using Disney artists/animators may seem credible enough but Divide by Zero

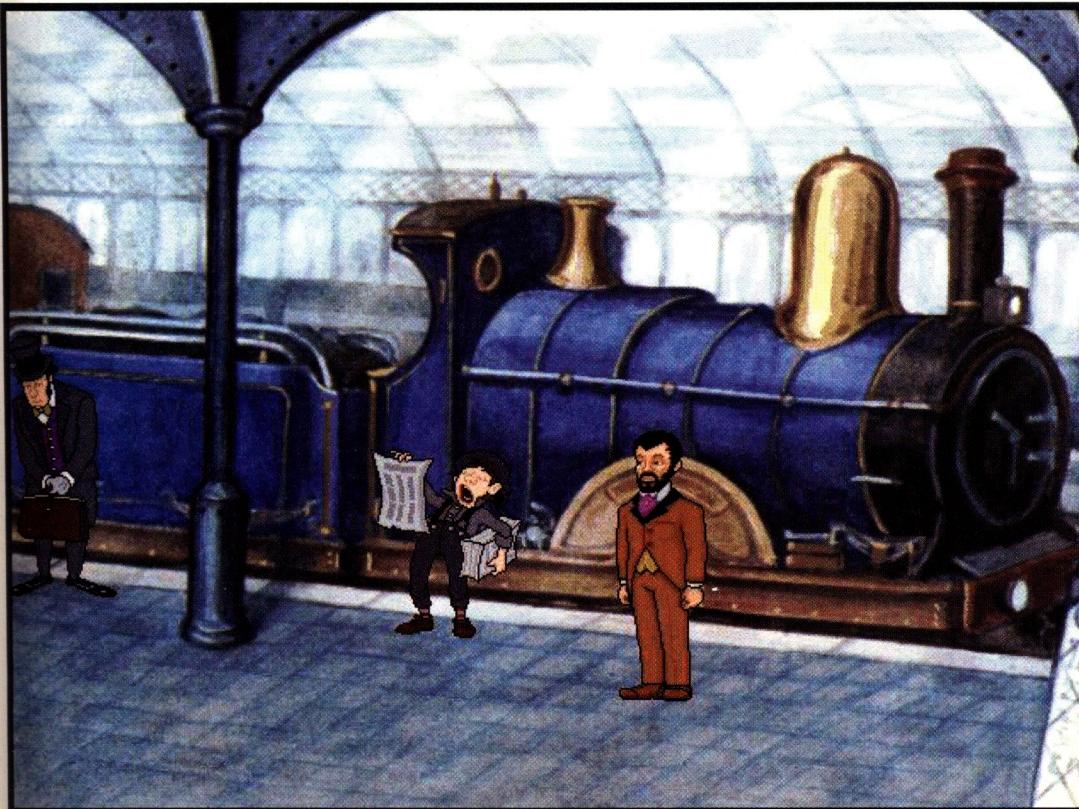
(Divide) realises this is not the whole story. The animations are done by hand using traditional cel techniques, so none of the artwork you see in the game was initiated on a computer. It is only at a later stage that the cel drawings are scanned into the computer via an Epson GT8000 and touched up.

Sherrington Fox will try and encapsulate the techniques used in the film industry. What Divide hope to achieve is a cartoon type, interactive game which is fresh and will capture the imagination of the public.

At the very start Divide had its own script written. It feels that its games are narrative lead with a strong story. "A good

(Right) Metal space suits and interstellar railway engines? Well this is based on Victorian times, after all.





game should lead through a path dictated by the writers and not leave a player aimlessly wandering around," said Andy.

What of the plot?

Sherrington Fox is Divide's own homage to Jules Verne. Although it uses many themes by this famous author, Divide digress constantly, using many Victorian situations. You could describe *Sherrington Fox* as being Jules-esque with Dickensian attachments. *Sherrington Fox* is an over-the-top, tongue-in-cheek, full of humour game.

You assume the role of a gentleman adventurer called Piers Featherstonehaugh (you have to take a deep breath before you say that one) who's approached by a talking cat (a victim of the world's first genetic experiment via a madman on a deserted tropical island). The cat informs Piers that the mad professor is creating a mutated army which is going to take over the world.

Being a rather heroic chappie, as everyone tended to be in Victorian times, Piers decides that this is not a fate the world deserves, so he begins to investigate...

Building a game

The setting for the game is the Victorian period, so most of the streets and buildings

are based on the imagery from that time. Having great graphics and superb animation isn't enough, even with a solid story, so a great amount of time and attention has gone into the puzzle building of the game and also regarding the interaction with other characters and objects.

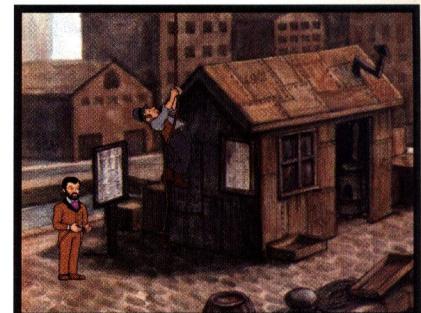
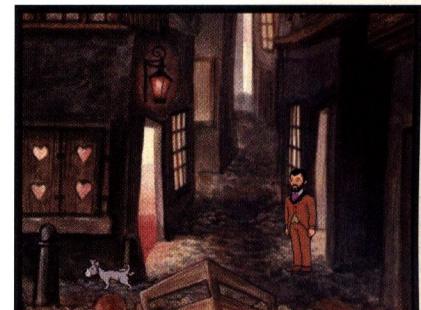
Before most of the artwork is started on, nearly all the interactive elements of the game are roughly designed, but the exact way things are manipulated is left to the artists. A fine balance of allowing the artists to conjure up their own ideas but at the same time not moving away from the theme of *Sherrington Fox* has been Andy's and Simon's main concern. "Once you start to give too many limitations, you restrict the creativity of the person. This is a refreshing method of producing a game, in our opinion, and is one that should be copied by the rest of the industry. After all, just because you're an artist on a game, it doesn't mean you have nothing to offer on the design level."

An example of this enlightened attitude advocated by Divide would be to give a minimum location to an artist, i.e. you are in the engine room of a ship, there has to be a boiler pipe that has a crack in it, and the puzzle is to tie a rag around the pipe

(Above) The beautiful background work in *Sherrington Fox* comes courtesy of Sue Tong, who has worked with Robin Williams and on the animated Beatrix Potter series.

(Top right) *Sherrington Fox* puzzle quality is promised to live up to the excellent presentation.

(Right) *Sherrington Fox* should benefit from experience gained from the *Innocent Until Caught* series.

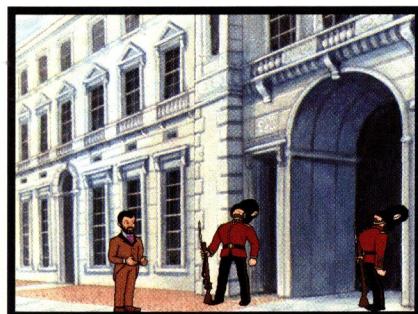


and the crack. Also there must be another door for the player to exit into the corridor aboard a ship. With these brief specifications the artists can conjure up what they want, and usually they come back with a much more imaginative idea than was originally envisaged by the designers!

Team work

Technically what the artists do is supply Divide with a Key Frame. In-between these frames computer animators will fill in the scenes. So far there are 2000 Key Frames which will be scanned in, and ten frames are added to each one by the animators. However, based on SVGA resolution, the programmers have perfected some really neat compacting routines in the region on 40 per cent compression. The main essence of the game is to try and immerse the player in the adventure, so a full screen will always be on view.

The team work between designers, artists and programmers should result in *Sherrington Fox* providing top-class gameplay. □



Blueprint

The Raven Project

PUBLISHER: Mindscape

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 01444 246333

RELEASE DATE: June

(Right) Ooh! A junction. How very exciting. I'm going to need a good lie down now.

(Middle right) Now that is what I call a tunnel.



A

HEM. Are you sitting comfortably? Good. Now pour yourself a stiff drink and sit back as I apologise (yes, *apologise*) to the French (yes, the *French*).

Here at PC Zone we've given the French a pretty hard time recently. I feel partly responsible, to be honest, what with having designed a Klik 'n' Play breakout game called "Righteous Justice", which replaced the common or garden electronic ball with a bleeding, screaming Frenchman's head, and everything. But now the time has come



(Right and below) You can point your ship in whichever direction you see fit during these segments - so you can kill anything and everything. Hoorah!



for me to hang my head, stare at the floor shamefully, and mutter the word "sorry".

"Porquoi?" I hear you cry. Have I fallen for a Parisian strumpet and been talked out of my xenophobic rage? No. Perhaps I have suddenly developed a penchant for crusty baguettes and fromage frais? No. Well then,

maybe I've been accosted by three Gallic, garlic-chewing heavies, who've threatened to cut off my lips with a pair of scissors and then force me to eat half a pound of salt unless I repent? But the answer, my friends, is an emphatic "non".

The simple answer is that the French are *shit-hot* at creating innovative, imaginative and beautifully-designed PC games.

**"...the French are
shit-hot at creating
innovative, imaginative
and beautifully-
designed PC Games."**

gave us the *Alone in the Dark* series, *Little Big Adventure*, *Flashback*, and soon *Hearts of Darkness*. And much as it pains me to do so, I

simply have to give them the credit they deserve.

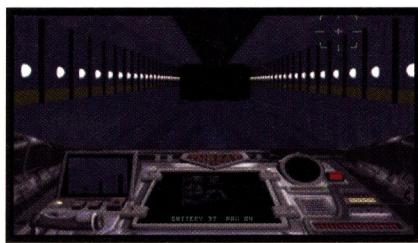
Here's another French title which looks like it could be something rather special. It's from Cryo, it's called *The Raven Project*, and it's a three-

dimensional shooty-killy, FMV-eey sort of thing. Raa.

Oh no, not another...

...FMV shoot 'em up! Woah there! Hold yo cynical horses! Don't write it off just yet. For whilst most FMV shoot 'em ups (from *Microcosm* to *Chaos Control*) are as dull as a





ten-hour-long Shane Ritchie retrospective on the telly, *The Raven Project* is going to feature no less than 50 different levels, split into three modes of play. You've got yer FMV bits, yer "virtual rendered landscape" bits, and last but not least, some "in-yer-face, real-time, 3D, spacey, shooty bits" as well.

The FMV missions are looking well tasty, as you can see from the screen shots, and what's more, in an attempt to avoid the pitfalls encountered by other FMV 'em up's (i.e. the mind-numbing tedium and repetition), these sections are going to feature a choice of routes. Basically, you will come to a junction every so often, and

choose whether you want to go left and right. Okay, so maybe that doesn't sound so incredibly exciting, but hey, it's a start.

The rendered landscape missions look a tad

Commander-esque, but we're assured that they're as slick, smooth and fast as Wayne Sleep, covered in grease, going down a Helter-Skelter (now there's an idea for a game). In case you're wondering, you can point your ship in whichever direction you see fit during these segments, all the better to kill things with. And as for the real-time, 3D space missions, well, they're rather like, um... well, they're rather like real-time, 3D space missions really - fly where you like, and kill anything you don't like the look of.

So then, hopefully this game shouldn't be another *Novastorm*-like excursion into Big Yawn City, we hope.

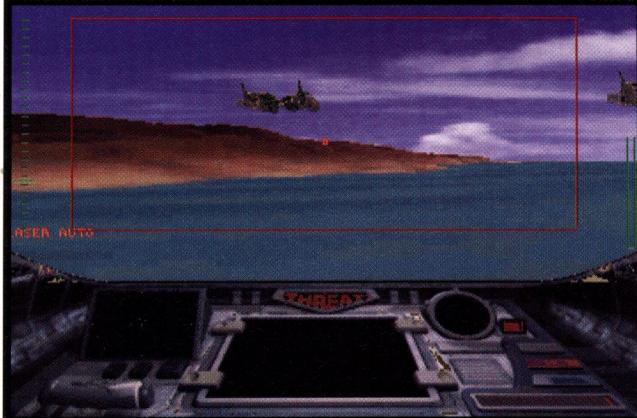
Tell me about cut scenes! Now!

Oh, alright then. *The Raven Project* is also going to be stuffed full of FMV cut scenes, all of which look suitably luxuriant, and

should drive the fairly pedestrian "aliens have invaded the Earth" storyline along nicely. There's over an hour of footage waiting for your visual approval, fact fans, but first, let me give you a word of warning - Cryo has had plenty of experience when it comes to delightful cut scenes - look at *Lost Eden* or *Commander Blood* if you think I'm lying - but its games have often suffered from a distinct lack of gameplay. Take *Commander Blood*, for instance. This was a carnival of wonder as far as your eyeballs were concerned, but was about as much fun to play with as a barbed-wire yo-yo.

If all goes according to plan, however, *The Raven Project* should be as much fun to play as it is to view. And as always, as soon as we can get our manly paws on a finished copy, we'll hold it up to the searing

light of criticism and tell you what we make of it. Till then, just keep 'em peeled and point 'em at these screen shots.



(Above) Hey! Where are all the pedestrians? Probably all indoors watching "Noel's House Party", I s'pose.

(Above left) In motion, this virtual landscape level's smoother than John Travolta.

Alright, who's next?

Okay, so I've apologised to the French. Never again shall I refer to them as a sweaty, repugnant offence to humanity. There will be no more comments about how French people are an arrogant race of soap-dodging, stubble-sporting, greasy-haired lechers. That was then, and this is now. Now they are our chums, our mates, our comrades, our lithe-limbed lovers, and our bestest pals in the whole wide world.

Unfortunately, this latest development in Anglo-Gallic relationships gives rise to a rather large problem - just who can we pick on next? Who else deserves to be subjected to a string of petty jibes, puerile taunts, and downright offensive ranting diatribes? Well, hey. Why don't you decide? Just tick one of the choices below, cut out the coupon, and send it in.

Is this a competition? Not really. The prize is something worth more than any material goods you care to mention - it's the satisfaction you'll gain from seeing your chosen victim pilloried, derided and verbally shot at in the pages of *PC Zone* each and every month.

Dear PC Zone,

I reckon you should really, really lay into...

- Shane Ritchie
- Americans
- Anyone remotely involved with politics
- Edge readers
- 17-year-old German tourists, especially the ones with heavy metal t-shirts and ugly bum-fluff excuses for a moustache
- People who read the *Daily Mail*.
- The French again, just for the hell of it
- David McCandless
- Everybody and everything (with extra emphasis on Shane Ritchie, in particular).

Please use lots of horrendous swearwords, and feel free to be as needlessly cruel as possible. Cheers.

Signed

Send to: Hate Mail, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ.



Blueprint

Dr Drago's Madcap Chase

PUBLISHER: Blue Byte

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 01604 232200

RELEASE DATE: June

Blue Byte is under the impression that it has discovered a genre of computer game that no-one has thought of before. John Davison takes a look at the game with a long, daft title.



LUE BYTE is getting very excited about its latest product for the PC. After wowing us all with the totally awesome Battle Isle 2 (which is still selling remarkably well, even though it's been out for over a year) the firm is now having a stab at trying to invent a new genre. A bold step perchance? Surely just about every style of game that there can be has already been released several squillion times?

Well, to be honest, *Dr Drago's* is a bit different from many other games. For a start, it's one of the few we've come across that is pitched as a multi-player game. Now I'm not talking about all of this *Doom*-style networks and modem-linking nonsense... no, I'm talking about a group of people sitting down in front of a single computer and passing the joypad from person to person. To play it alone would be a bit

boring; this game is something that is designed to be played by a group of people, ideally a family.

The game of life?

The object of the game is actually pretty simple. You have to move around a map of the world, travelling to randomly chosen destinations while trying to acquire as much money as you possibly can. Movement is dictated by a set of predetermined paths around the world, and the distance that can be travelled is affected by each player having a bash on a slot machine which generates random numbers. As you move around, each "step" of the route is coloured according to one of three different rules, and depending on which colour you land on, you either have to pay a penalty, receive a *Monopoly*-style "chance" card, or you are given the opportunity to purchase property (which in turn can make you money in the form of rent).

This is all well and good, and makes for a nice turn-based race around the world, but there is an added problem which comes

in the shape of the malevolent Dr Drago himself. This tached loony spends all of his time cruising the world, trying to make life difficult for people by nicking their money and spending it on wine, wimmin

A board game?

As we looked at the early versions of *Dr Drago's*, for the purpose of this Blueprint, struck us that as far as the concept of the game goes, this version is far from original. In its desperate attempt to develop a new genre of computer game, Blue Byte has effectively re-invented the board game by making it bigger and adding a non-player character. Just think about it - a random number generator, chance cards, moving

steps... the list goes on. It's almost like a vast cross-breed of *Monopoly* and *The Game of Life*.

Where Blue Byte has succeeded in producing something new, though, is by changing the way people actually play the game. Computer games have long been a solitary experience,

but with *Dr Drago's* we now have something that is intended to be shared by a group, and, more specifically, a family.

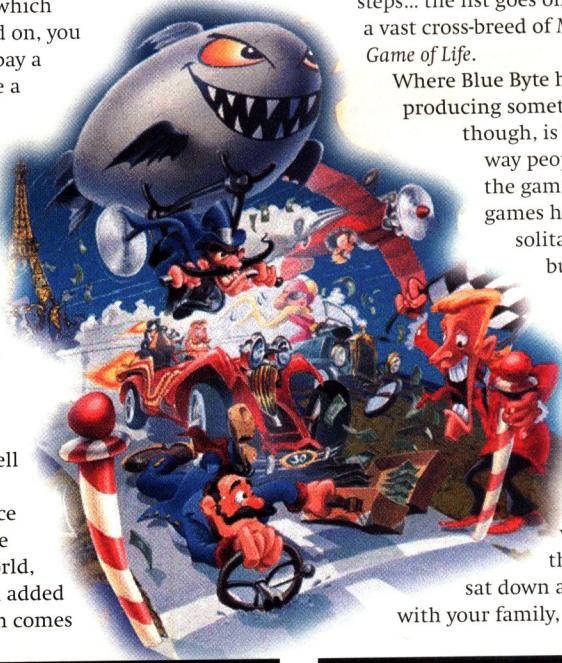
Be honest, who was the last time that you actually

sat down and played a game with your family, eh? Exactly.



(Above) The SVGA visuals are crisp and clear, and the overall style is very, er... "user friendly", I suppose.

(Right) To be honest, this looks a bit like an awfully big board game.



BLOOD, SWEAT & GEARS

Hi-Octane™

Hits the streets **June 30th**

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Blueprint

Phantasmagoria

PUBLISHER: Sierra

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 01743 303322

RELEASE DATE: June



T WAS the kind of day that made you want to stop exactly what you were doing, tilt your head skywards, feel the warmth of the shining sun on your forehead and let out a big sigh.

Julian was aroused from his sun-induced fervour by something rather wet and sticky touching his hand. Sensing that it might be George playing some stupid prank, he flicked his wrist and caught the offender in the chops. Timmy let out a yelp and ran off into some nearby foliage to lick his wounds.

Anne immediately ran over to comfort him and lost her hair-band in a nearby crop of stinging nettles. Letting out a short cry, she too disappeared up to her neck in the forbidding foliage.

"Crikey!" yelled Dick, "where's Anne disappeared to now?" flicking his hair in preparation for a heroic rescue. Without so much as a word, someone swept past him, the familiar, pungent smell of cigarillo smoke immediately told him it was George. Rolling up the sleeves of her over-sized donkey jacket she jumped headfirst into the greenery and disappeared without a trace. Julian and Dick shot each other a knowing look and leapt in after her. It looked as though they were going to have yet another adventure - Hoorah!

An Awfully Big Adventure

"Have we fallen into a parallel universe?" enquired Anne, politely.

"I don't think so," retorted Julian, "I think we've just jumped through a hedge into what looks like a car park."

"Look! There's Timmy over there, going into that warehouse. Let's follow him!" yell-

ed Dick.

"Let me go first, I'm the oldest," ordered Julian, pushing to the front, as the group disappeared through the gaping doorway.

A Seedy Adventure

The young band of intrepid adventurers crept quietly into the dimly lit warehouse just in time to see Timmy cocking his leg against a large pile of cardboard boxes. Sensing this might lead to a spot of bother with the owners of the building, George immediately rushed over and performed a perfect sliding tackle on the surprised mutt's hind legs, bringing him crashing to the ground. Caught in mid pee, Timmy gave a surprised yelp and legged it to the other side of the warehouse. "Bravo!" yelled

Anne. "Good feet!" exclaimed Dick, impressed by George's impression of Roy Keane.

Whilst Dick and Anne helped George up Julian made his way over to the pile of the (now soiled) boxes to inspect the damage. "I think we must have stumbled into one of Ford's warehouse," he remarked. "You see, every box in this room has the word 'Sierra' stamped on it. The boxes are obviously full of car parts."

The rest of the group wobbled over to examine the boxes in further detail. "But the return address on this box is American," remarked Anne, softly. "I didn't think they manufactured European specification Sierra car parts in the Oakland, California

"I knew that!" snapped Julian, "I was just testing you."





(Right) "Open up now. This won't hurt a bit!" No one could find a decent dentist in Oakland.

(Left) Actress Victoria Morsell after using Oil of Sperm Whale facial cream

"So what is in them?" asked Dick.
"Let's open 'em up and find out," offered George, and before anyone could attempt to stop her, she whipped out her Navy SEALs Combat Knife and attacked the nearest (dry) box. The razor-sharp serrated edge bit deeply into the soft cardboard, and there was soon a large, gaping hole revealing brightly coloured packages inside.

"That's not car parts," retorted George smugly, pulling one of the boxes free. Julian immediately snatched it away from her and started to examine it closely. George grimaced and suppressed the urge to stab him, as he let out a cry of mock wisdom. "Oh, I know what this is!" he exclaimed, "it's *Phantasmagoria*; that new CD adventure game from Roberta Williams - Queen of game developers extraordinaire."

"Ooooh, lovely - I like a bit of smut now and then!" gushed Anne. "Let's have a look!"

"No!" replied Julian sternly, pulling himself away. "Not 'seedy', but 'CD', as in 'CD-ROM'."

"So what's it all about then?" enquired George, desperately trying to prize the box from Julian's manicured fingers.

"Well, it's not like her usual stuff," Julian went on, "There won't be any cutsey, fluffy bunnies or fairies in this game. It's a psychological thriller, you see. You play the part of this rather sporty heroine who's plunged into a house of horrors and chased about by nutty gardeners and a wicked magician known as Carno. It's coming out on seven CD's, features years of FMW, 'movie style' special effects, spine-tingling music and a large dump of blood and gore."

"I'm not sure I'm going to like it then," squirmed Anne, genuinely frightened.

"Don't worry, stupid!" mocked Julian,

"they've built in a kind of gore button that cuts to different edit points so you can just adjust the level of violence to suit your audience."

"Now that is clever!" pitched in Dick, desperate to steal some of Julian's bravado. He'd read about it too, almost a year ago, but couldn't remember the details.

"So is it going to be like nothing else ever produced before?" enquired Anne.

"That's what they're saying," Julian informed them, "and it's going to be huge, with over 800 rooms - all beautifully rendered by Russian graphic artists on Silicon Graphics Machines - to explore; a new, single-cursor interface including an on-screen inventory and a permanent vocal help option, so even you, Anne, will be able to play it straight away."

"Super!" exclaimed Anne.

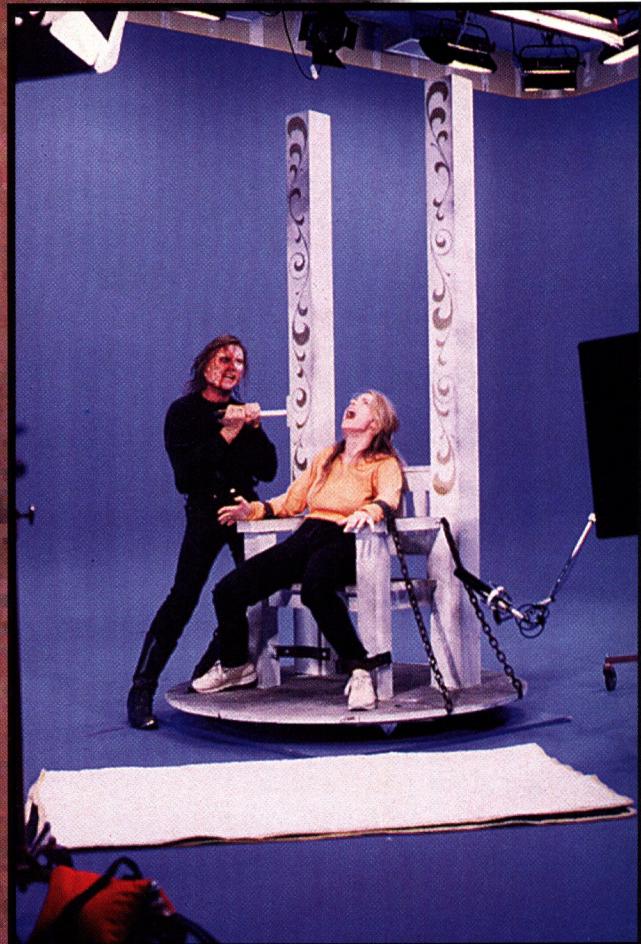
"Well let's bugger off home and go and have a real adventure," bemoaned George, desperate for some action."

"You mean we can just sit at home and have an adventure, instead of wandering about a rose-tinted, socio-political representation of England in the '50s, ridding the world of ruffians?" said Anne, looking quite excited.

"Absolutely!" exclaimed Julian. "We'll just stick this little lot in the disc caddie of my P90 and away we go - in no time at all we'll soon be having the best adventure of our lives!"

"Yeah - Christ! I mean, sod all this ginger beer and hill walking bollocks. I'm not getting any younger and I'm dying for a pint of home brew," snarled George.

And with that they gathered up their belongings, snapped on Timmy's leash and went home. □



Blueprint

Picture Perfect Golf

PUBLISHER: Empire Interactive

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0181 343 7337

RELEASE DATE: June

When it comes to taking holiday snaps or a round of golf, it's never just a case of simply point and shoot for Jeremy Wells. Who better to preview Empire's picturesque pitch and putter, seeing as neither David Bailey nor Seve Ballesteros were available?



OU CAN usually tell whether a golf game will be any good after playing the first hole. Just 300-odd yards of pixelated greenery is usually enough to establish whether the player interface is easy and accurate enough to use; whether the screen takes too long to re-draw; whether the noise the ball makes as you address it with your carefully selected club is adequate; and, of course, whether the standard of the graphics are detailed enough.

After a couple of rounds or so, with a couple of other players accompanying you, you can pretty much ascertain whether it's a golf game you will go back to, and heaven forbid, even buy a couple of extra courses for. Or, whether it's a golf game that you will inevitably toss casually under the desk, muttering about the price of computer games, where it will be lost forever.

The original version of *Links* had enough of what it took to keep it from being lodged between your printer and joystick cables, as does the new improved CD version. The same goes for *PGA 486* from Electronic Arts.

World Cup Golf from US Gold made it a "labour of love" to work up the enthusiasm to actually play a full 18 holes, whilst *Nick Faldo's Championship Golf* and *World Class Leader Board* were so frustrating to play that after just a couple of swings you had to resort to stabbing yourself in the leg with a fork in an attempt to calm yourself down.

Swings and roundabouts

By going for, what can only be described as graphical perfection, Empire have inevitably left themselves a bit short in one or two areas. As a result, *Picture Perfect Golf* is indeed graphically perfect, but on the down side the images do seem to look a bit on the flat side (after only two rounds, they start to look rather dull). When you add the fact that there's no scrolling, zooming, nor movement throughout the course, it makes you wonder whether you might prefer less



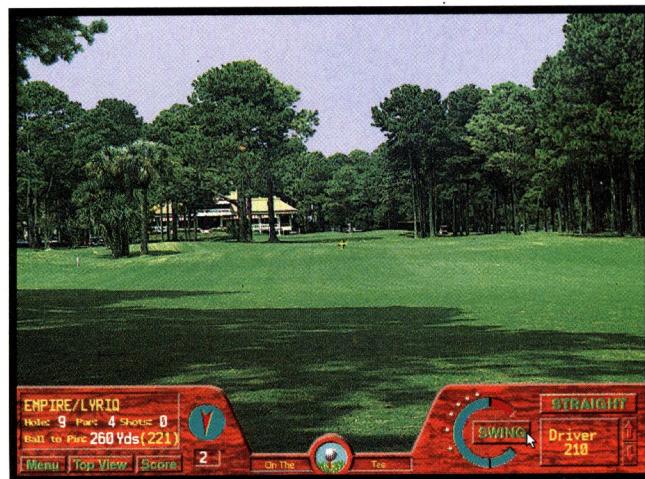
in the way of perfect pictures and more in the way of variation to make the whole thing less of a glorified slide show.

Empire have, however, done certain things to disguise this. There are lots of interesting sounds to listen to (varying from singing birds to droning engines - presumably of flying aircraft, and what sounds like chattering monkeys) to cock your ear at. The screen re-draw rate (the bane of many a golf game) is impressive. The sound produced when you thwack the ball is nice and meaty (when it hits the ground it sounds like it's made of Depleted Uranium). There are three levels of difficulty, and the lighting varies from shot to shot to give the impression of changing weather/location. There are also the usual auto club select, half swing, draw and fade options.

No splashes or bounces (boo!)

Because it's all picture perfect and, therefore, static, there's absolutely no interaction with the player environment: no bouncing off trees; no sploshing into lakes and streams; no conifers gently swaying in the breeze. There's a constant wind-ometer to help you make each shot, and you can opt to re-take a shot if you've got your Muli-gan switched on. The interface is easy to use and it works with that virtual club thing. It uses lasers and mirrors so that you can swing in your living room and watch where you've hit the ball on the monitor.

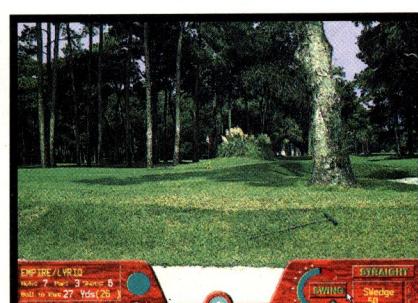
Picture Perfect Golf has a lot going for it in terms of gameplay and graphics, but with only one course on such a big disc, how long will it last before it starts to get intimate with your power cable?



(Above) Harbour Town Golf Links - what a nice place to be.

(Left) Golfer's Paradise - you'll never see your ball bounce off the trees in this game!

(Right) The user interface is simple and easy to use. Click on the mouse or space bar - hold it - let go and click it at the bottom for a perfect shot.



WRECKLESS DRIVING



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hi-octane

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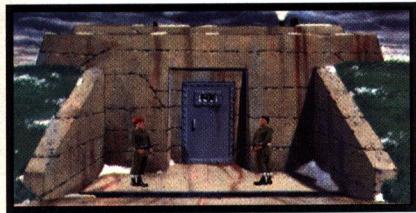
Prisoners of Ice

PUBLISHER: Infogrames

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0171 738 8199

RELEASE DATE: July '95



(Above) "Your name's not down, you're not coming in!"

(Below) "Sir, why is there a large conweb over the map on the wall?"
"I don't know, but I'm going to sack the cleaner straight away!"

Infogrames is working on yet another spooky adventure game. Chris Anderson bravely peeps out from under his bedcovers to investigate.



OLLOWING ON from the outrageously successful *Alone in the Dark* trilogy, Infogrames has decided to press on relentlessly with its continuing theme of releasing games designed to scare the hell out of everybody with the impending release of *Prisoners of Ice*. Infogrames' obsession with H.P. Lovecraft is again evident (the game is based on his novel *The Mountains of Madness*) as it was in its early hit *Shadow of the Comet*, another game based around Lovecraft's works. However, if you're expecting a *Shadow of the Comet* look-alike with a slightly different theme, you're in for a hell of a surprise.

"All the characters move round the game environment as smoothly and naturally as though they were real people."

Surprise surprise

Prisoners of Ice, not to put too fine a point on it, looks absolutely incredible. The hand-painted backgrounds are superb and the graphics in general are very detailed. But what caught my eye the most when I first saw the game is the movement of the characters. All the characters move round the game environment as smoothly and naturally as though they were real people. This is not such a surprise considering that the characters movements are all generated

using a new graphic creation technique called Motion Capture, which uses the movements of real actors as a basis for the movements of the characters in the game. Infogrames claims this is the first time real actors have been used to generate movement for characters in adventure games, although I seem to remember a certain platform game called *Prince of Persia* which claimed to do the same thing. Either way, ground-breaking and revolutionary or not, *Prisoners of Ice* looks stunning, and judging from the sneak preview we had in the office, it looks as though the gameplay will be up to the usual high standard we have come to almost take for granted from Infogrames'

adventure games. The plot, for example, is as tense and gripping as you would expect from a game based on a H.P. Lovecraft novel. Here's the lowdown...

Nazis and tentacled things

If you want to produce a game with a storyline full of nastiness and all types of underhand monkey business going on, bringing the Nazis into it is a pretty safe bet. *Prisoner of Ice* not only has Nazis in it, it also has monsters which can safely be described as being even nastier than German people.





(Far left) "You don't wanna go in there mate! You'll get toasted!"

(Left) Now that's a really beautiful example of early Baroque architecture if ever I saw one!

The adventure begins in the Ahenerbe, a secret Nazi military base in the South Pole. Stranded on this base are: Peter Hamsun, a famous explorer; his son Bjorn; and a Navy commando called O'Leary. The trio have just been watching the 100th re-run of *The Great Escape* on telly when young Bjorn, all of a sudden, has a brainwave: "Let's tunnel through the ice and make a daring escape," he says to the others. "Don't talk crap, son," his father says, "it would take bloody ages, and anyway, we don't have anything to make a tunnel with." Undeterred, Bjorn scours the room for suitable tunnelling implements. "What about that fork over there?" he says hopefully. "Shut up or I'll kill you!" O'Leary shouts excitedly. "Let's just grab those three crates over there marked 'top secret', jump on that dog sled conveniently left outside the door by the Nazis, and bugger off!"

And so it comes to be that the daring, yet incredibly stupid trio, set off into the snow with the mysterious crates to see if they can get help. Not far into their journey, disaster strikes. One of the crates falls off the sled and partially opens up. "Bugger," says O'Leary and jumps off the sled to pick up the crate. As O'Leary approaches the crate a horrible tentacled thingy jumps out, bops him one and drags him down into the ice. Disturbed at this alarming turn of events, Hamsun decides to investigate. As he nears the crate, O'Leary (or at least what

is left of him), jumps out and grabs him and pulls him down into the ice with him. Bjorn gets shit scared, grabs the remaining two crates and pisses off into the snow as fast as his legs will carry him. Bjorn bumps into a group of British soldiers who take him back to their submarine, the H.M.S. Victoria. As the boy tells his horrific tale to the fascinated soldiers, an American agent is listening with particular interest. His name is Ryan. He doesn't understand half of what the kid is going on about but what he does know is, something must be done.

You play Ryan as he sets off in search of the tentacled thingies and tries to find out whatever it is the Nazis are up to.

Featuresville

Prisoners of Ice is choc-a-block with impressive features. All 40 characters in the game act and move in eight directions. There are numerous gameplay locations, from the Nazi military base to the Falkland Islands, Buenos Aires, Tihuanoco and even Illsmouth (the location for the original *Shadow of the Comet* game). In addition there are 70 whole minutes of superb backing music (the soundtrack for the game is one of the best I've ever heard); an auto-save option, which brings you back to where you were if you have the misfortune to cock up and get killed; and the CD has both VGA and SVGA versions of the game. Also, as you would expect from a CD adventure, all the



characters will have voice-overs. I can't vouch for how good (or bad) these will be because in the preview version I saw, all the characters were speaking in French.

However, judging by the overall feel of the game, you can expect the English voice-overs to be as good as the rest of the product.

On the evidence of what we've seen, *Prisoners of Ice* could be Infogrames' best adventure game to date. Look out for a full review in the next issue. □



(Above) Each background is beautifully rendered in hi-res graphics by top artist blokes. And there's hundreds of 'em.

(Left) It's amazing what a nice flower arrangement can do for a room, isn't it?

(Far left) The home guard practice marching in a tight, little spot.



“He who has the gold makes the rules!”

machiavellian /, maekie'velien/ *adj.* elaborately cunning; scheming and unscrupulous. ◊◊
machiavellianism *n.* [N. dei Machiavelli, based on the writings of a 15th century Florentine statesman and political commentator who advocated morally questionable methods in the interest of the State]



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the Prince

For PC CD-ROM

MICRO PROSE

Blueprint

Space Quest 6

PUBLISHER: Sierra

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 01734 303322

RELEASE DATE: July '95



We thought we'd get Charlie Brooker all excited by telling him that Sierra's new adventure would enable him to get inside a woman. We didn't tell him it would be in her lower intestine.

PICTURE THE SCENE. You've written a highly successful series of humorous science fiction adventure games. There's been five installments so far, and the public at large is clamouring for a sixth. Unfortunately for you, you've used up just about every possible "space" joke, and exploited every single deep-space scenario you can think of. So what do you do?

Well, if you're Scott Murphy and Mark Crowe, authors of the Roger Wilco Space Quest series, you sit down,

have a think, and decide to cheat a little bit. Because *Space Quest 6* is mainly set in "inner space", as it were. You remember *Fantastic Voyage*, the archetypal Sunday-afternoon-on-BBC1, family sci-fi thriller? The one where Donald Pleasance and Racquel Welch and a bunch of other people

(who shall remain nameless thanks to my own all-conquering ignorance) were miniaturised and squirted inside a human body? You know, the one where

they're floating about inside the inner ear, and everyone has to be really really quiet so the sound vibrations don't

"The interface has also undergone a short, sharp shock, leaving it simple, accessible... and versatile."



kill them, and then some dunderheaded nurse in the operating theatre outside drops a bloody big set of tweezers on the floor, and the resulting clang nearly turns the lot of them to paté? Well, *Space Quest*'s a bit like that. Except it's a computer game. And since it doesn't feature Racquel Welch, the overall standard of acting is likely to be significantly higher (although, admittedly, less busty).

The next exciting instalment

In case you're an avid *Space Quest* fan, you'll probably like to know that this game picks up the thread just where the last episode, *Space Quest 5 - The Next Mutation*, left it dangling in the wind.

Having loused everything up yet again in an amusing Norman Wisdom-like fashion, poor winkle Roger has been demoted once more to a lowly janitor's position on board a massive space exploration vessel. Oh for the life of a tragic-comic hero. The storyline finds the girly-haired do-gooder getting shrunkified down to nano-tastic proportions, and injected into the body of some painted jezebel who he's taken a shine to. Why? Well, for three reasons, actually:

1) Because she's been brainwashed by some horrible nasty thing, and fixing the damage from the inside seems to be the most logical way of going about it.

2) It means that Roger can at last truthfully claim that he's been

(Above) Roger stumbles across a room full of rather odd pink mushrooms pretending to be a lung.

(Left) Milton Keynes had really gone down hill ever since the Liberal Democrats had got in.





inside a woman at least once in his sad, pathetic life.

3) Because it provides the authors with a whole new range of things for them to take the piss out of.

Spruced up and SVGA!!

The chuckles will doubtless flow like steaming urine from a recently skewered bladder, as Master Wilco journeys through the collected slippery nooks and squishy crannies that make up the human body, on his way to the untamed grey matter of the brain. Gasp! As he wanders nonchalantly through the acidic slime pits at the base of the stomach. Squeal! As he slides through a convoluted set of intestines and scrapes his fingernails down the sides as he does so. Feel Sick! As he pulls backflips inside a perfectly healthy set of lungs, etc., etc., etc.

Still, this could well be something rather smart. Time marches on, and Sierra has taken the opportunity to spruce up everything worth sprucing. Roger now stumbles about ineptly with the dazzling clarity that only SVGA graphics can provide, and since this latest episode is to be a CD-only release, he speaks, too ("in English, French or German!" it says here, so hey, he may be a thick

(Above) Nice graphics or what? This time it's all in hi-res, and they've spruced up the user interface too.

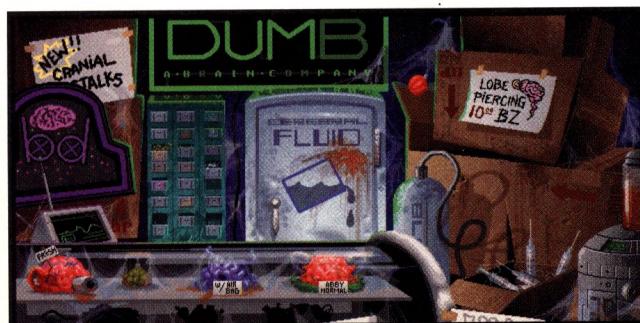
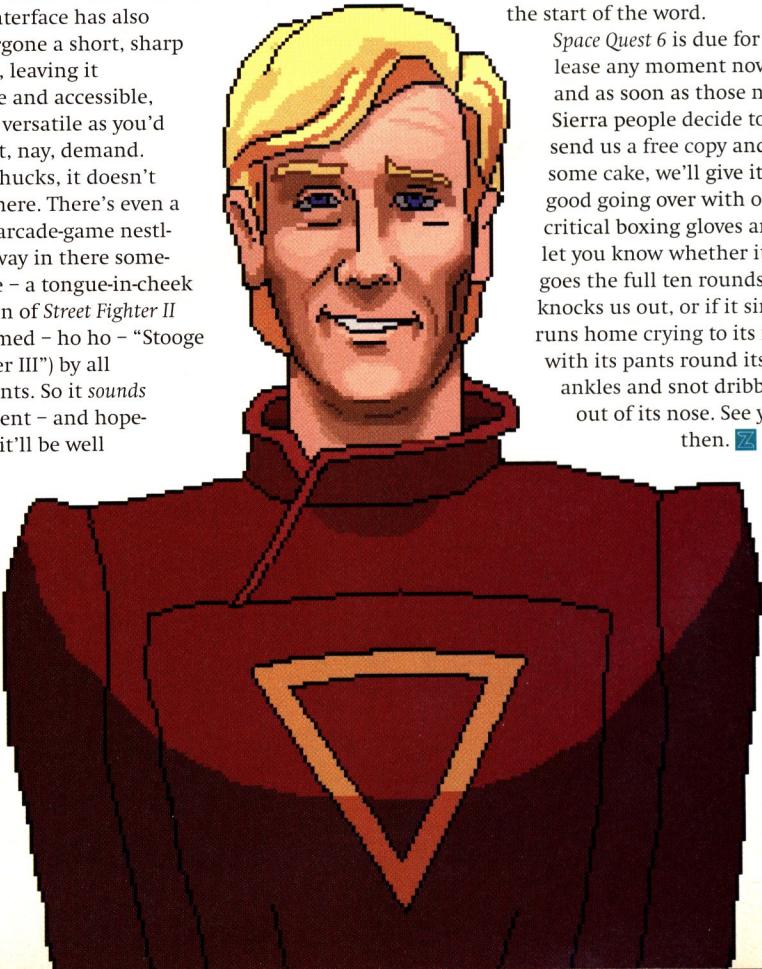
(Below) In space, no one can hear you clean. That's why no one bothers to tidy up.

twat, but at least he's trilingual).

There's also going to be lashings of the by-now-mandatory 3D-rendered graphics as well, just for good measure. At this rate, by the time it arrives on the shelves, it'll no doubt be able to fly; travel between differing planes of reality; and shoot lightning bolts from the tips of its fingers, too.

The Sierra standard

The interface has also undergone a short, sharp shock, leaving it simple and accessible, yet as versatile as you'd expect, nay, demand. Hey, shucks, it doesn't end there. There's even a mini arcade-game nestling away in there somewhere - a tongue-in-cheek version of Street Fighter II (renamed - ho ho - "Stooge Fighter III") by all accounts. So it sounds excellent - and hopefully, it'll be well



up to the high standard of another Sierra adventure, which we recently raved about, namely King's Quest VII.

Needless to say this sort of performance comes at a price, and the bad news for many of you will be the minimum 486 with 8MB of memory required to run it. Mind you, these days, unless you don't mind playing endless shareware versions of asteroids until the day you die, upgrading's pretty much essential anyway, and if you haven't got a CD-ROM drive yet, well, you'd best get one then, hadn't you? If you can't afford one, I recommend burglary.

So when's it out then?

By now, Space Quest aficionados should have turned the magazine to pulp beneath a river of excited drool. Well, look. This is a preview, and a preview is a preview is a preview, only becoming a review when there's a finished copy of the game in question at hand, and one less "P" at the start of the word.

Space Quest 6 is due for release any moment now, and as soon as those nice Sierra people decide to send us a free copy and some cake, we'll give it a good going over with our critical boxing gloves and let you know whether it goes the full ten rounds and knocks us out, or if it simply runs home crying to its mum with its pants round its ankles and snot dribbling out of its nose. See you then. 

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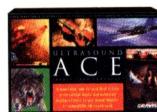
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Blueprint

Terminal Velocity

PUBLISHER: US Gold

PRICE: £39.99

TELEPHONE: 0121 625 3388

RELEASE DATE: June/July

THERE'S BEEN the odd murmur here, the odd mention there, but apart from that, the imminent arrival of *Terminal Velocity* from Apogee has been kept relatively low-key. And not surprisingly, it's another first-person perspective shoot 'em up. Are we ready? I mean, it's not as if we're stuck for choice now, is it?

Now Apogee is renowned for its share-

The price you have to pay...

The game engine for *Terminal Velocity* may look similar to *Magic Carpet*'s but, in fact, it leaves the latter standing. Scattered around each map are tunnels into the ground, leading to vast caverns and networks of corridors. Objects are mostly texture-mapped polygons which are animated with seemingly little effort. As with *Carpet*, an SVGA option will be available (640x480), but only upon registration. There's always a price to pay, though – the minimum recommended spec is a DX2/66 with 8Mb! As you can imagine, nothing short of a Pentium 90 will be needed for the full experience. Time to start saving...

ware, but shareware's been taken to a new level with the likes of *Doom* and *Descent*. To hold your own in this arena you had better be packing more than brute force. On top of this, *Descent* and *Magic Carpet* brought a completely new perspective into play – is Apogee, perhaps, out of its depth? Not a chance, matey!

Magic Carpet with balls

Now, I'm with the folk at Apogee on this one. What they have done is taken *Magic Carpet*, thrown out the rug, sacked the guys in the curly-toed slippers and removed any mention of manna. In their place go ninja space ships, aliens and the sort of weaponry not seen since *Waco*. Your ship handles just like the carpet did (i.e. it defies gravity whether fighting above land or the surface of vast spaceships), but at turbo speed. On top of this Apogee has added vast maps with huge mountain ranges and so many



Apogee's forthcoming title combines elements of *Magic Carpet* with *Doom* – yet another game to join the glut of first-person perspective shoot 'em ups... Gareth Ramsey hastily jumped on the bandwagon.

enemy spaceships, ground units and structures, you daren't blink for fear of certain death. This, in my opinion is what *Magic Carpet* should have been.

So it's a flight sim, then?

Well, yes and no. In its simplest form, it is, but it's more the *TIE Fighter*-type than the "Pacamac-required"-type. "Missions" are limited to destroying a sequence of ground targets before you can leave the level by the "exit", and navigating is simply a direction finder. Dog-fighting is really superb, and there's a "boss" at the end of each stage. So if you want complexity and strategy, you can think again.

So it's an arcade game, then?

Yep, absolutely. There are plenty of power-ups – from quad lasers to rockets. It's fast and totally intense.

On top of all this, the first six levels are released as shareware, with registration bringing more levels and an enhanced engine (see left). A well-tasty recipe, I'm sure you'll agree. □



(Left) Er... the tunnels don't look flat in the game.



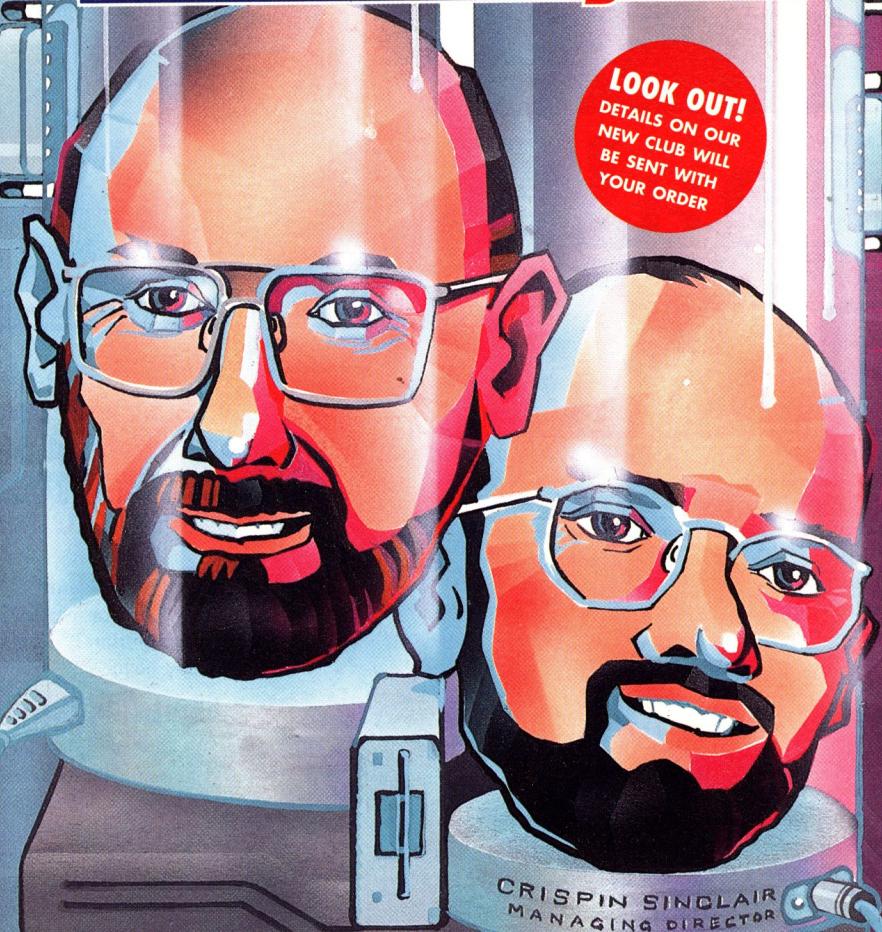
(Below) Never play with matches.

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Games reviews are what **PC ZONE** is all about, and over the next 100 or so pages you'll find loads! All games receive an overall mark out of 100 and are scored according to the following guidelines:

90+ (PCZONE Classic)

Highly original idea, expertly executed, utterly flawless in all departments and oozing long-term playability.

80-89 (PCZONE Recommended)

High degree of originality and extremely well executed in all but one department.

70-79

Strong idea and well executed, though not necessarily very original. Weaknesses do not impair playability and it has a reasonably long life.

60-69

Adequate. Games falling into the "If you like this style of game you'll like this, if not you won't" category.

50-59

Seen it all before. Take it or leave it. Not a terrible game, but definitely not exactly fab either.

40-49

Dodgy but playable (probably only once).

39 & Below

Seriously weak - avoid at all costs!

Specs Box

Check out the Specs Box for a guideline as to what memory, graphic and sound support you will need to run the game, and if you're still not sure what we're on about the In Perspective box should give you an idea as to how the game compares with others of its genre.

WHAT'S IN OUR DISK CADDIES?

Some PC games get played, others get nixed, some get binned. Here is what's on our hard drives/in our disk caddies this month:

Star Trek: TNG

Command &

Conquer

Panzer General

Super StreetFighter II

X-COM

Sim Tower

52 COMMAND & CONQUER

58 LOADSTAR

60 1830

63 BRETT HULL'S HOCKEY 95/ALEX DAMPIER'S HOCKEY 95

66 VIRTUAL POOL

68 DOMINUS

70 JAGGED ALLIANCE

72 SIM TOWER

74 DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER

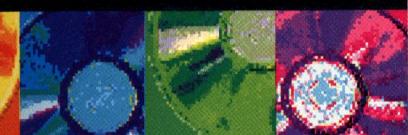
76 FRONTIER 1ST ENCOUNTER

78 MAN. UTD. - THE DOUBLE

81 TOWER ASSAULT

82 MACHIAVELLI THE PRINCE

84 CHAOS CONTROL



PC

ZONE

CLASSIC

Command & Conquer

After pulling down his VE Day bunting, Duncan MacDonald decided it was high time for a bit of military action, and who better to target than the king of despots – Stephen Spielberg.



(Right) Superb cut scenes ahoy! There's hundreds of 'em and they're all fab. Slick is not the word!



A

RE YOU sitting comfortably? Good. Now before we begin, here's the entire review summed up in a handy, bite-sized algebraic equation. Ready? *Command & Conquer* equals *Dune 2* plus *Cannon Fodder*, times five. Or, to shorten things further and make it look more mathematical, how about this: $C\&C = (D_2 + CF)^5$. Pretty neat, eh? The only extra information you may require is that *Command & Conquer* has been produced by the same team who wrote the twice aforementioned *Dune 2*, and could, very easily, be called *Dune 3*. (If it was set on Arrakis, of course, which it isn't - but you know what I mean).

No, I don't know what you mean...

The only reason for not being up to speed at this early point in the review has to denote a severe unfamiliarity with *Dune 2*. And this can be forgiven, seeing as it did come out over a year ago. So here's a quick prequel update for the uninitiated.

Dune 2 took the viewpoint and exploratory factors from *Civilization* (please... I'm not explaining *Civilization* as well - we'd be here all day), and added to it an element of *Sim City*, whereby you had to set up a "war base" in the middle of an unknown territory. The more you managed to build up your base, the more goodies you could make - such as soldiers, tanks, rocket launchers and so forth. The unexplored areas around you, as with *Civilization*, were initially "blacked out". You couldn't see diddly, essentially, until you sent scouts out to have a little looksie. The rub was, however, that there were heaps upon heaps of baddies out there, who were up to the same thing as you.

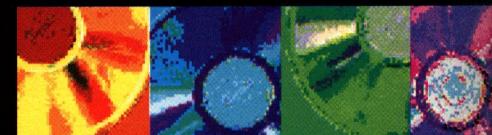
Dune 2 scored a particular hit (with me at least) in that it wasn't "turn based". It was, instead, all in real-time. Action, action, action from the word go - the mouse spent much of its time transformed into a vicious blur as you highlighted your troops and told them where to go.

And addictive? Ha! "Do you want to come round my place and do some crack?" said a friend on the telephone one time. "No," I said, "I'm playing *Dune 2*". That sort of thing.

But anyway, *Dune 2* was excellent. Its only problem was that there just weren't enough levels, and that the "story" didn't really contain a sense of "unfolding", as it were. It was just plonk, plonk, plonk... game complete.

And you say Cannon Fodder?

Everyone is going to say *Command & Conquer* (*C&C*) is like *Dune 2* and *Cannon Fodder*, which is why I made sure I did as well. But seeing as how *Cannon Fodder* was itself vaguely similar to *Dune 2* in the first place, it's unsurprising that it gets a mention in the genre stakes.



In fact, about the only place in which *C&C* is more similar to *Cannon Fodder* than it is to *Dune 2* is in that it's rather more "soldiery" (as opposed to overtly "sci-fi"). In *Cannon Fodder*, though, you only ever got to play around (and this isn't a criticism) with a handful of troop members at a time. In *C&C* you get to play around with about a zillion. And then there are the equally numerous

tanks and things, taking us up to roughly 9000 squillion units, all on the go simultaneously, all blasting away like nobody's business. Screams, mutilations, tactics, bravado. Yummy.

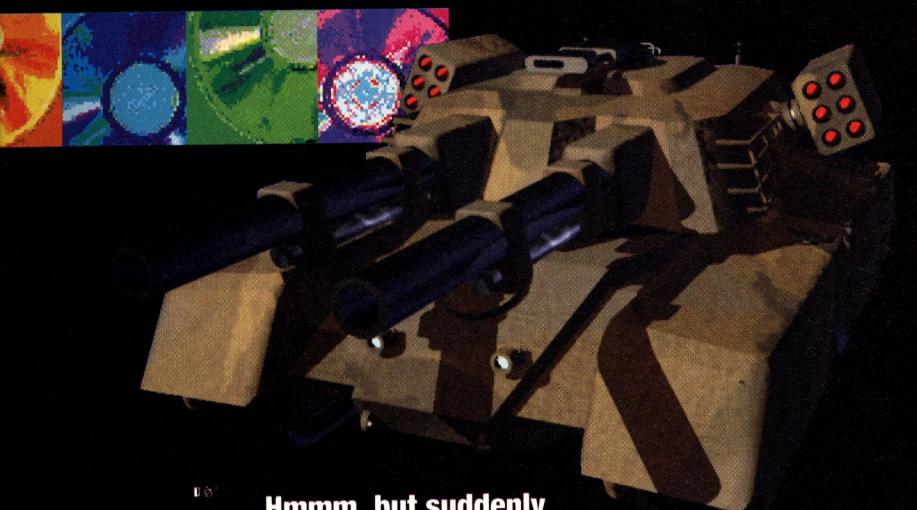
More details please...

Wow, where do I start? Oh, I know. I'll start with a tiny bit of a cop-out by saying that the version of *C&C* I played wasn't quite finished. No, actually that's wrong. It was finished, but it hadn't sort of had all the final bits quite "put together" yet. Imagine it as a kit-car with the wheels, chassis, engine and transmission in place. I can vouch for the ride, because I took it out for ten laps, and it was faultless. But I can't vouch for the eventual quality of, say, the mudguards. Or, er, the windscreens-wipers. You know what I mean? It's a structural thing. But the way I think of it is like this: considering the supreme playability of the near completed jig-saw I've seen so far, it would take an absolute genius to mess things up now.



(Above) You will fight them on the beaches. You will fight them in the forests. You will fight them absolutely bloody everywhere!

(Left) The story behind each mission is quite superbly illustrated by a jaw-dropping animation.



Hmmm, but suddenly I'm suspicious...

Don't be. Really. Just think "Blimey, what a scrupulously honest computer mag," and stick with what I'm saying. Erm, which was what exactly? Oh, shit, I've forgotten where I was now. What was the last-but-one heading again?

More details please...

Oh yes. Well, how about I play you through level one? Just so you get the "feel" as it were.

First off there's a talking head FMV intro... with a map, showing a beach-head. The enemy, apparently, has a secure hold on the left-hand side, but there appears to be a fairly undefended insertion point to the right. Game on. Move to overhead view. You have control.

Your troop ship drops three grunts onto the beach and departs. You click on grunt one, move the mouse cursor west (for instance), click again, and he says "moving out!". He starts to trot left, into the inky blackness that denotes unexplored territory, not aware that he's the equivalent of the actors in old *Star Trek* who wore the red jumpers. The two remaining grunts you decide to keep together - so you click, hold and drag the cursor to enclose them in a "box".

"What starts out like a stroll in the park, regarding difficulty, soon becomes a camping holiday in Cambodia."

Release the mouse button and they're now a unit, and will move together. So you send them due north, again into inky blackness.

Suddenly, gunfire. Your first grunt has, in his travels, revealed two enemy soldiers who were hiding among hitherto invisible trees. He has dropped (on his own - the excellent AI deals with that sort of stuff) to the prone position and is letting rip with his rifle. Do you click on him again and denote a specific target? Move him back? Or how about let him get on with it? And now the other two trooper members have "discovered" an enemy tank, and have gone slightly gung-ho themselves. Decisions, decisions, decisions. Then the computer speaks in a spooky, disembodied, Mariella Frostrup type voice: "Reinforcements have arrived". And sure enough,

another trooper has dropped off a further three grunts. Mouse frenzy akimbo. Two grunts dispatched west to aid your red-jumpered Star Trek soldier, and one north. "Reinforcements have arrived," says the computer again. Oh, wow! It's a tank. Click on the thing and send it... er, west or north? No, you decide to leave the grunts to their own devices for now. You decide to spread out thinly and explore rather than simply hold ground. So the tank gets sent North West, like seriously deep into the invisible badlands. Before long, loads of stuff is going down, and a lot more of the landscape has been revealed.

If you've played *Dune 2* you'll know the score, only it's worth



Mission: Destroy Spielberg Island



1 No sooner had the attack troops landed than a lone Spielberg unit could be seen running toward them. "This is it, boys," yelled sergeant Randell, priming a napalm grenade, "This grenade has got E.T. written all over it." Corporal Gupta slammed a clip of dum-dums into his Heckler And Kosch: "And these are for *The Colour Purple*," he spat, "My girlfriend made me sit through that pile of shite twice!"



2 The initial Spielberg resistance was heavy, but badly executed. The beach was soon littered with the corpses of the cloned director. Sergeant Randall and Corporal Gupta headed off inland, picking off, en-route, isolated Spielberg units who were hiding in bushes. They were soon joined by a light battle tank. Corporal Gupta had been badly wounded, but he gathered some strength during this brief respite.



3 Suddenly they stumbled on a mass of Spielberg units, swarming outside what could possibly be the main Spielberg base. Corporal Gupta levelled his bazooka and fired towards a personnel carrier in the trees. The last words that the 12 Spielberg units inside the vehicle heard were these: "This is for your immaculately trimmed beards!" If the speed of sound had been faster they'd also have heard "...And Jaws 2!"



4 "That's for *Jurassic Park*, sucker!" screamed Private Zimmerman as the Spielberg exploded into a mess of fleshy bits. Zimmerman was guarding the newly erected Stormtrooper camp, and the moments of action were few and far between back there. (The soldiers had been forced to come up with a rota system to ensure that they would all get at least one Spielberg kill before the day was over.)

5 charge slow Had he w large He th port he wa bit of



underlining that the terrain in *C&C* is far more varied and far more interactive – and it can bugger you up big time, if you’re not careful. Oh, and also that the aforementioned excellent AI already mentioned ensures that the computer plays more like a human. (The enemy troops retreat, panic, spread out and suchlike... they don’t just all swarm Lemming-like at your base in a mindless but heavily-armed column.)

So where's the Sim City stuff?

Oh yes, sorry. On level one the *Sim City* doesn't really come particularly into play, because that's where you're making your initial "landing". On level two and beyond, however, you've generally got to "build things". And the inventory available to you grows and grows and grows over time – presuming you've got the cash, of course (and the cash is generated, just like in *Dune 2*, by mining). Get your dosh operation up and running, get your base well defended, and you will soon be producing soldiers, troop carriers, jeep thingies, missile silos, mobile rocket launchers, tanks, gun emplacements, flame throwers, and on and on and on. You'll spread gradually out. You'll be forced back in again. You'll try out the "pincer movement" you once heard a dreary, hex-loving war-gamer talking about in the pub. You'll win, you'll win, you'll win... and then you'll lose. You'll attack, attack, attack... and then your base will be swarmed over by the enemy because you forgot about the words "defend your flanks".

What starts out like a stroll in the park, regarding the difficulty

StarDate: very slightly in the future.

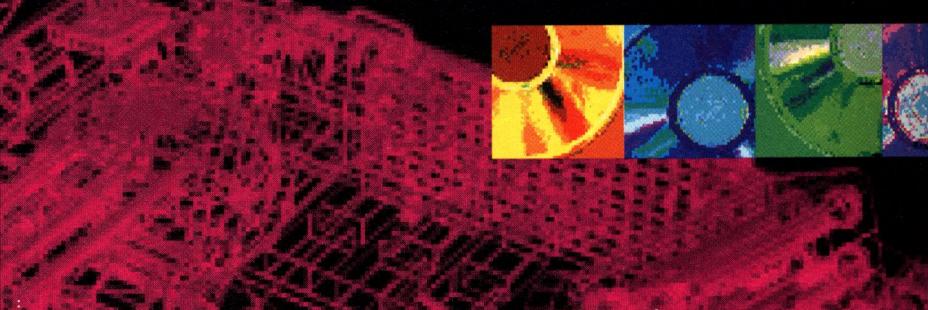
Mission Background: Having become the Aaron Spelling of the Movie World, Stephen Spielberg decides to cash in his chips and slip out of LA before the ghettos finally erupt. He moves, wholesale, to an exotic island in the mid Pacific. He hires scientists to clone



5 Things were even more boring for Private DuPont. He'd been put in charge of defending the, as he put it, "big slow thing which doesn't have any guns". Had he been higher in rank, it's possible he would have been told the role of the large and somewhat cumbersome vehicle. He then would have understood the importance of his duties. As it was, however, he was just rather pissed off. He felt like a bit of a twat.



6 Back at the front, things were heating up. "This is for *Schindler's List*," yelled Sergeant Randall as he lobbed a grenade towards a group of four Spielbergs. From way off behind, he heard Corporal Gupta's voice: "But Sarge, wasn't that quite, er, worthy?" "Yes," replied an angry Sergeant Randall, "Not unlike the superb BBC2 documentary of two years before. No oscars for that one, though, was there, eh? Bastards!"



level, soon turns into a unicycle ride through downtown LA – and eventually becomes a camping holiday in the north-eastern mountains of Cambodia (in which your tent has just been surrounded by 41 gun-toting 12-year-olds, all high on magic mushrooms). Or something like that, anyway.

I think what I'm trying to say is this: "the learning curve is well defined". (So why didn't you just say it? Ed.)

Do the graphics look like, er... the screenshots?

Amazingly, yes they do indeed. But obviously the real graphics actually "move". Sometimes in reviews you can say things like "the screenshots don't do the game justice," or alternatively "the screenshots make the game look a lot better than it actually is". But, in



(Left) Whoops! That one should get the Fatwah coming in thick and fast!

him – and they produce the Spielberg Army. Lots of Stephen Spielbergs, hell bent on defence of the main Stephen Spielberg, who's holed up in his fortified film factory, working on *Lassie Saves A Child* (starring Bob Hoskins, Tom Hanks and Macauley Culkin).

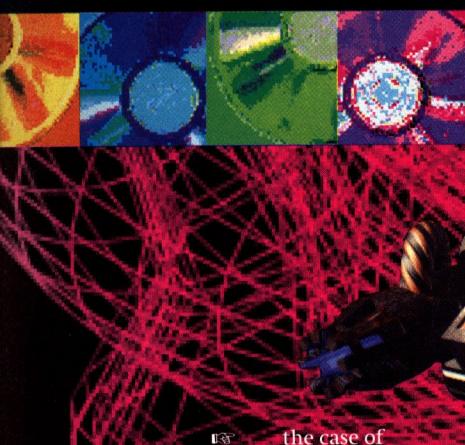
Mission Objectives: You must destroy all Spielberg units. Show NO mercy.



7 Sergeant Randall was now joined by several other stormtroopers, ready for the final push. Two Spielbergs were trying to scurry back into the camp. Corporal N'gomo asked if he could dedicate his two remaining bullets to particular aspects of *Close Encounters*. It was okayed. "This is for being totally girly," said the Corporal, firing once, "and this is for the poofish aliens." There were cheers from his chums!



8 And now, after a final fire fight, they were three – and the building in front of them contained the actual, original, bona fide Stephen Spielberg. "How are we going to finish it, Sarge?" asked Private Stanton, "Are we going for the Family Version or the Director's Cut?" Sergeant Randall smiled. "It looks to me like it'll be the Director's Cut," he said, fixing his large and shiny bayonet firmly to the barrel of his rifle. (Cuuu! Ed.)



(Below) The in-game presentation is top class. So good in fact, you'd think it was in SVGA. It moves pretty sharpish, too.

the case of *Command & Conquer*, neither of the above applies. In other words, you can probably guess roughly what the moving graphics are going to be like... in other words, everything is fine and moves fluidly. Oh joy! Right on target, I'd reckon. Streets ahead of *Dune 2*, and slightly better than *Cannon Fodder*, just in case you want reference points.

Zipping from the graphics to the sound effects, it's a similar, reassuring story. The graphics are big and bold, and the sound is big



and boomy. The music, moreover, is actually well worth cranking up to full volume at times. Amazing but true. Heaps of tracks are available, and they're nearly all splendid. Maybe David Braben should have a quick listen.

So what's the final gig?

To sum it all up then, I can only say that *Command & Conquer* is everything I hoped and dreamed *Dune 3* would be, and even more besides. Not only does it exude gameplay from every pore, but the presentation is absolutely top class. We're talking best cut scenes ever here, make no mistake. And there's hundreds of them - some of them are even slightly amusing. The option to play head-to-head against a "real-life" opponent in real-time immediately catapults it into the multi-player hall of fame. Westwood really couldn't have done a better job.

As a final, final thought, let me quickly add the following. When I was a kid and my comics turned up on a Saturday morning, they'd mainly be *Spiderman*, *The Avengers* and so on. But amongst all this American stuff there was a British comic, too. (I think it might have been called "The Valiant", or something equally wanky.) But the point is that, in this British comic there was a strip called something along the lines of Colonel Arsewipe And His Pocket Army (again, the memory is a bit hazy). But what I do remember for certain is this: Colonel Arsewipe And His Pocket Army was brilliant. This sad, old git had an entire remote-controlled miniature attack force: soldiers, tanks, planes - the whole nine yards. And I dreamt of one day being like Colonel Arsewipe myself, with my very own "pocket army". And now, thanks to *Command & Conquer*, I am. And you will be too. It's all rather tragic really, but hey, who really gives a toss? Just avoid talking about it in public, basically.



It's better than a game of conkers mate!

If, perchance, you get just a bit fed up playing the good guys all the time, you can always swap sides, don a rather unconvincing, girlie 'tache and play the bad'guys. This allows you to kick some severe goody-two-shoes soldier arse in your bloody great tanks, construct top-sneaky bases and ambushes to catch the good fellows unawares, and even blow up trees and tie fireworks to squirrels' tails without so much as a pang of guilt.

This added dimension not only equals "loads more gameplay ahoy", but means you have to develop new tactics and game plans to deal with a different type of enemy and hardware to meet your new objectives.

As if that wasn't enough, you can also go head-to-head down a network and play against a pal. Because it's all real-time the action is guaranteed to be hotter than the exhaust pipe of an XR3 that's been cruisin' Romford High Street on a Friday night, and you can rest assured that it's a lot more fun (and a lot less sad).

It is not recommended that you attempt such a contest without playing the game to death before laying down a challenge to a would-be aggressor, however. Be warned that this is two-player gaming at it's fastest (and best), and whilst victory is undeniably sweet, defeat is guaranteed to leave you feeling about as useful as a cat flap in the giraffe cage at London Zoo and about as frustrated as a game tester playing a patchless version of *Frontier: First Encounters*.

If it all gets too much, you can always cello-tape a picture of Stephen Spielberg onto a conker and smash it mindlessly against the nearest wall. This will not improve your ability to play *Command & Conquer*, but it will make you feel better.



SCORE

Let's call a spade a spade this is *Dune 3*, and bloody good it is too!

Minimum Memory: 4Mb or better

Minimum Processor: 486 33MHz

Hard Disk Space Required: 15 Megs

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SounderBlaster

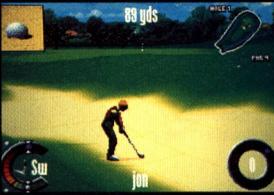
AdLib, Ultrasound and compatibles

Controls: Mouse

Publisher: Digital Integration **Tel:** 0234 56789

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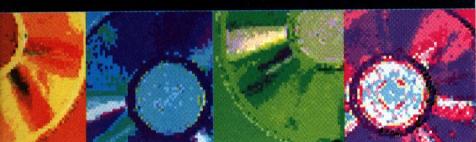
PC AND PC CD-ROM

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DESIGN LIMITED

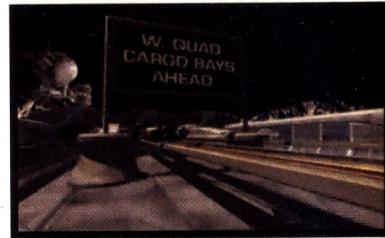
256 COLOUR
GRAPHICS AND A
CHOICE OF 3
'VIRTUAL' CAMERA
ANGLES

2-PLAYER OPTION

Loadstar



Loadstar's a game on rails. And it's about to send Charlie Brooker off his proverbial trolley...

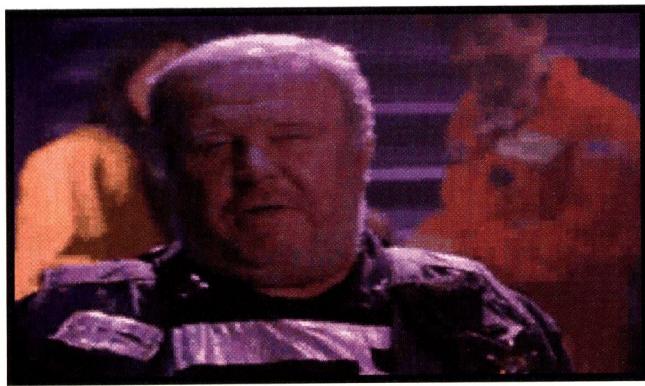


Loadstar



(Above) If that isn't a game unashamed to be "on rails", then I don't know what is.

(Right) You're leaving the South Quadrant. Probably the best thing to do, really.



LIFE, WE ARE constantly told, has its ups and downs. One day you're strolling arm in arm with the one you love, basking in glorious sunshine, through the glory of the English countryside - and the next you're being torn to ribbons by flying shards of white-hot metal in the immediate aftermath of a full-scale nuclear attack. Peaks and troughs, peaks and troughs.

But what of those "in-between" moments? Those moments in life which are neither good nor bad? The meaningless moments in which little or no emotion is experienced? The moments that you hardly realise are happening? The banal, the boring, the empty swathes of time which pass you by each and every day? Those "Richard and Judy" moments?

Let me give you an example. You're sitting on the toilet. You've just evacuated your bowels. You're just about to reach for a piece of paper, tear it off, and start wiping. Got that? Okay.

Now, I want you to picture that moment, freeze it there, and think about it. Your arm outstretched, trousers round your ankles, a blank expression on your face. A moment of pure humdrum tedium, crystallised, held in stasis. I

want you to think about all the vapid nothingness that goes through your head at that exact moment in time. A time devoid of all thought, devoid of all meaning, and utterly devoid of all emotion.

Good. You now know all you need to know about Loadstar, the new game from Rocket Science.

What's the story behind it then?

Loadstar is yet another "game on rails". It's yet another FMV shoot 'em up. Its presentation is slightly more polished than most, but basically - that's it. We're talking yawnland here.

The plot concerns one Tully Bodine - a rough and ready space captain who's undergoing a perilous mission. Blah blah blah



PC

Pitched as the greatest flight sim ever to grace the PC, *Flight Unlimited* from Looking Glass, proves that you don't need guns to have fun in the sky. Simply cut around the template, whack it on your keyboard and you'll be up, up and away—hey—hey!!

ZONE



ESC
BRINGS UP
OPTIONS



Q
Quit to
FBO

W
Rewind
recorder

E
Eject
recorder

ALT-R
Recorder
On / Off

P
Playback
recording

-
Throttle
down

+

Throttle
up



F11

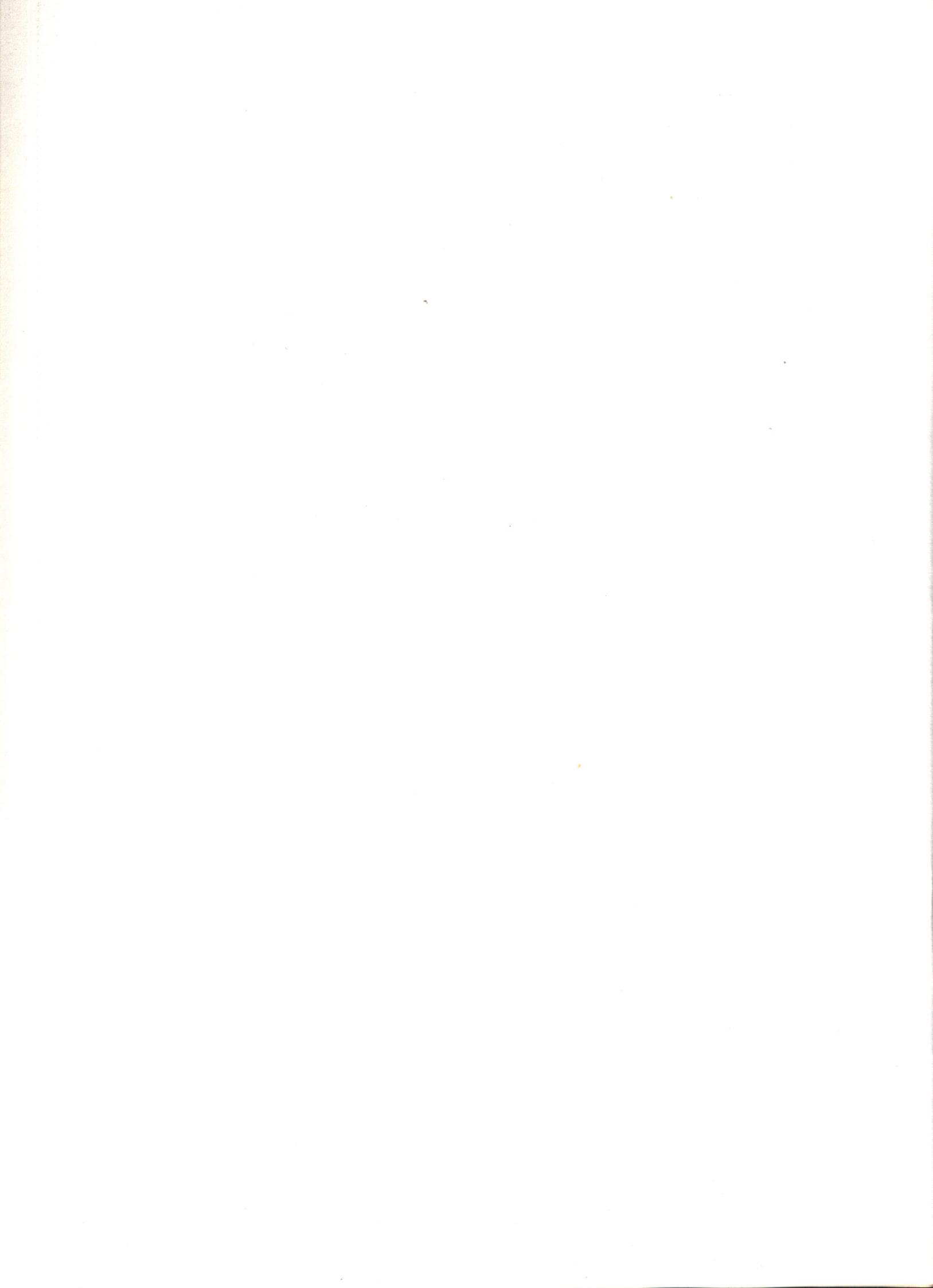
F12

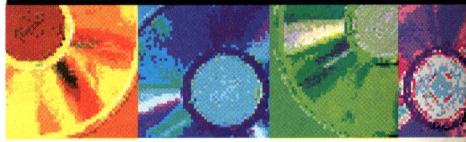
- Gamma Correction +

Flight Unlimited

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S	Toggle side window
ALT-X	C
V	ALT-B
SPACEBAR	/





blah. Blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah-dy blah. And only YOU can save the day.

Cue much brainless pointing, clicking, and exploding. Oh yeah - I almost forgot. This is a game on rails with a difference. You can steer the ship.

I thought you said it was a "game on rails"?

Well yes, I did. It is. But, occasionally, *Loadstar* does give you the opportunity to steer left or right. And, to its credit, the footage changes accordingly, with absolutely no pause whatsoever. This, we are assured, is a major step forward in gaming technology. And what a difference it makes. Remember the old laser-disc arcade game, *Dragon's Lair*, in which a jab of the joystick was followed by a brief pause while the next video sequence was being retrieved? Yeah? Well, now, thanks to Rocket Science, those brief pauses are gone forever. Sadly, what this means in practice is that your FMV tedium is no longer punctuated by brief, Zen-like periods of blankness. Instead the tedium just keeps on truckin', with nary a pause in sight. Yes! It's boredom alright, but at least it's new, improved kind of boredom.

Keep thinking about that toilet.

Isn't Rocket Science "the next big thing"?

On this evidence, I certainly hope not. Apparently the company has a large amount of Hollywood film-production talent at its disposal. There's certainly a lot of Hollywood sheen on show here, and you even get a recognisably famous face in the form of Ned Beatty. The cut-scenes look very professional, and the motion is extremely smooth indeed (if a little on the blocky side). Oh yes, make no mistake, it certainly looks nice, but then so does a wax banana. Although, come to think of it, a wax banana has more gameplay possibilities than this poxy game does.

Hollywood talent has always been good at disguising a trite script by padding out the finished movie with endless special effects. It just doesn't work with games. It's either a good game or it isn't. And it has to be said (yes, has to,) that *Loadstar* definitely isn't. Do you want me to go on? Do you want me to get angry about it? Do you want me to tell you in no uncertain terms just exactly what I think of it...?

...Yes, go on, give it a slagging

No. I just couldn't be bothered. I feel completely drained. Have you ever seen *Dawn of the Dead*? It's an old George Romero movie; one of his trilogy of zombie films. Anyway, there's a scene in that film where the four main characters are escaping zombie-infested Pittsburgh in a helicopter. They've flown out miles into the countryside, yet down below on the ground, they can still see more zombies. That's when they start to realise that the living dead are absolutely everywhere, and that basically, they, as living humans, are out-



numbered. And instead of screaming, or shouting abuse, they simply go all quiet and start feeling depressed. And down below there's a bunch of hillbilly idiots who think the whole thing's a laugh, and they're chugging back the Budweisers and using the zombies for target practice.

Well, that's how I'm beginning to feel about FMV shoot 'em ups. They're depressing, they're more dead than alive, they're growing in number by the day, and only a drunken imbecile would want to play with one. So there.

What are you going about zombie films for?

Well, for one thing, watching *Dawn Of The Dead* would be preferable to playing *Loadstar*. As a matter of fact, being in *Dawn Of The Dead* would be preferable to playing *Loadstar*. And anyway, it's a really good horror film, and you should see it. And it wasn't made in Hollywood, either. Unlike *Loadstar*.

Which was.

You're just wittering, aren't you?

Just keep thinking about that toilet.

What's going to the toilet got to do with it?

It's relevant. Honestly. There's just not much to say about this game because there is no game. It's an endless, pointless exercise in nothingness. It bored the hell out of me. It has nothing to offer to anyone. It's an empty, empty thing. Like I said, just pause for a moment and think about what goes through your head when you're sitting on the toilet. Because that's what went through my head when I played *Loadstar*. Nothing, nothing at all. If you want to waste your money on it, then go ahead, spend away. It's a free country (almost). Just don't say I didn't warn you. Now wash your hands.

(Above) Wrong way, huh? Ho hum. Er... Yawn. (Picks nose, scratches backside.)



SCORE

A perfect example of nothing at all (with nice FMV bits in it).

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 486 SX25 (VESA Local Bus)

Hard Disk Space Required: 10Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: BMG Interactive **Tel:** 0171 973 0011



Paul Presley is not a trainspotter. Oh no. His large collection of railway magazines, model trains and anoraks is purely a sexual thing...

1830 RAILROADS & ROBBER BARONS



KAY, Paul Presley's Irrefutable "Law of Computer Gaming No. 34b" clearly states the following:

34b. Any computer game based on an original board game will not be any good for any one of the following reasons:

- (i) It will invariably cost more than the original board game would.
- (ii) It will defeat the purpose of the original game; that of fun, social interaction away from the trappings of modern day technology.
- (iii) Anyone wanting to play the game in question would much rather sit around a table with his/her friends, rolling dice and moving little plastic pieces than sit in front of a computer screen, watching a computer roll dice and move little digitised plastic pieces.

People may take issue over the latter two points with the following argument:

"Paul, what if you do not possess any 'friends' with which to play the board game in question. They may be, let's say, away on holiday or visiting a sick relative in hospital or some such. What then? Surely a computerised version of *Snakes 'n' Ladders* would be just the thing, eh, eh, eh? Eh?" Should someone approach you with such a

gambit, first, punch them in the face for calling you Paul when your name is so obviously Kevin or Allan or Adrianna.

Secondly, deliver the following riposte: "If I were all alone - and with my social life that is hardly ever an option - but if I were, I should hardly want to play a board game." I've never once been sat in front of the telly, enjoying the roguish antics of TV's *Lovejoy*, only to bolt upright and declare "Ooh, I could really do with a game of *Pictionary* now". Now nobody wants to play board games that badly. You only ever get them out when a dinner party is going downhill, and even then only if one of the guests is an estate agent.

This then is my position: computer board games don't work unless you remove all evidence that there was ever a plastic dice cup (or in the case of earlier models - a Popomatic) associated with the title in question. The question I will attempt to answer between now and the word "satisfaction" is, does *1830* do this?

Not on your nelly!

But I'll tell you about it anyway. It's essentially *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. A board game conversion set in the heady world of

the great American railway companies of the early 19th century. Being a board game conversion it means you can't play it alone, real-world strategy style. Instead you have to have the company of at least one other (be they human or computer), battling it out on the stock market and the shunting yards of a hex'd North America over a set number of turns.

Your aim is to be the most successful (read: wealthy) Baron by the time the game reaches its terminus, through both personal and corporate worth. This is achieved by buying and selling stock in the various railroad companies (yours and your opponent's) and by building a thriving and prosperous railway network. The only problem is that, despite a very friendly and well presented manual, I never really felt that each separate game was that different from the last. No matter which company or from where on the board you began, each game runs in much the same manner. You start small, build slowly until you begin to make some money, expand gradually and invest in the most appropriately sensible company at the time. Without the kind of freedom and comprehensibility of games such as the *Railroad* and *Transport Tycoon* brethren or any of the

(Right) Stockbrokers of the world unite!

(Far right) I'd heard the Big Apple had gone bankrupt but that's ridiculous. I earn more than that.

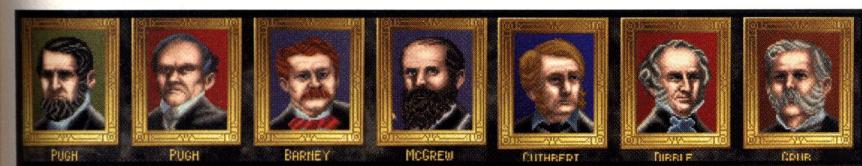


1830 Railroads & Robber Barons

REVIEW



(Left) North America in the good old days. Before the deadly killer Amtrak virus took hold.



Sim family, you can't inject any real personal character into each foray at corporate empire building.

I don't mean to imply that 1830 is a bad game, it's just not a very interesting one. From a technical point of view you can hardly fault it. It looks nice, sounds nice, is very well presented and you're never fighting against the programming. All the background mechanics and accounting is taken care of for you, and you can always see exactly where you stand with little more than a click of the button.

I've never played the actual board game in question but I can only presume that it remains faithful to its parentage.

Actually, thinking about the fact that this is based on a real board game, I can't help but wonder, with a certain degree of horror, about what it must be like to play for real. There's such a high level of monetary management going on in CPU space that I would expect financial firms could use it to train their accountants. Plus, the kind of people who would enjoy playing it would be the kind that, if they were a girl in a film, would be the one that spent half the picture looking dowdy but who, after removing her spectacles and shaking down

her hair, which is long and flowing, in soft-focus slow motion, would reveal herself to be just as geeky but would now simply bump into things all the time

Waterman's folly

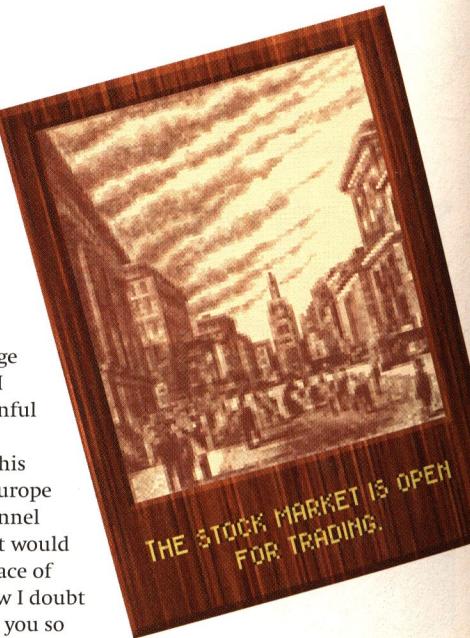
I don't know why we seem to see so many strategy-based games set in the early years of American colonisation. I would find it hard to believe that there are that many Americans interested in this historical stuff (How else can you explain the success of things like Power Rangers and drive-by shootings?), but perhaps a bigger question is, why exactly do we get infected with the things?

1830 could have been an okay enough game, but its subject matter is such that it is unlikely to be of much interest to anyone other than visiting American students who are majoring in railroad history (whatever "majoring" means). Along with semesters and grade point averages, I've never really understood the American Education

System). Plus its slavery to the mechanics of the board game does little to ensure it a reservation in the first-class carriage of my gaming shelf (if I might indulge in a painful railway metaphor).

Maybe if they'd set this game in modern-day Europe and included a Eurotunnel option or something, it would have had the saving grace of topicality, but somehow I doubt it. Trains can only take you so far, eventually you have to get off and complete the journey in some other manner.

1830, for all its multi-player board game faithfulness, lies stranded at the metaphorical games playing station without anything to give it a feeling of total travelling satisfaction. □



SCORE

Well presented but limited pointlessness.



Minimum Memory: 4MB

Minimum Processor: 386SX 33 MHz

Hard Disk Space Required: 12Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: US Gold Tel: 0121 625 3366



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HUNTINGTON \$43(4)	

(Left) Who owns what, how much it's worth and whose pocket you are currently in.

(Far left) "We've got a pulse doctor." (That was really terrible and not even slightly train-related. Ed.)

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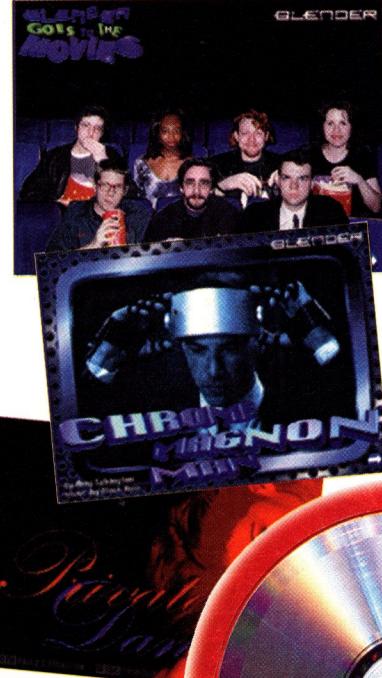
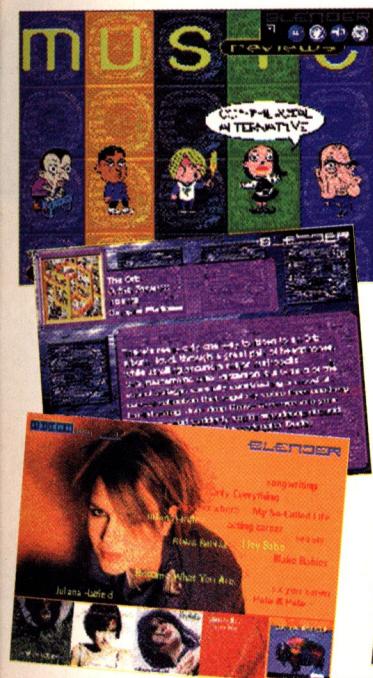
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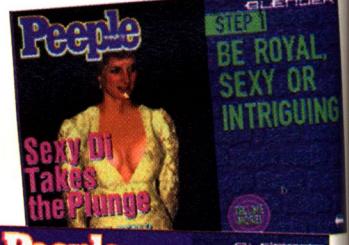
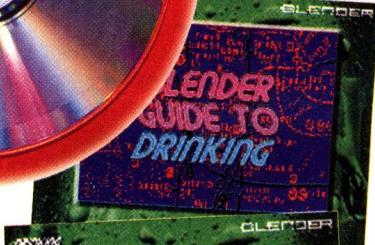
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FACE OFF

Brett Hull Hockey '95 vs Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95

Using just the sort of stunning originality for which this mighty organ is renowned, we gave Paul Presley the task of reviewing two games in one review. Plus we thought it was a well-sneaky way to cut down on his wages.



RACE YOURSELF oh-gentle reader-type person, for we are about to embark upon the kind of review journey that only comes along just once in a lifetime, or once every time we come close to our editorial deadline date and have too much software and too little space. There are two hockey games sitting in my criticism in-tray and I shall attempt to compare and contrast, contrast and compare, both titles within the breadth of a single review. All without the use of a safety net or stunt double of any kind. I can hear you gasping now. (Those are signs of exasperation as they wonder how long you can keep this waffle going. Ed.) Hum.

Jolly hockey sticks

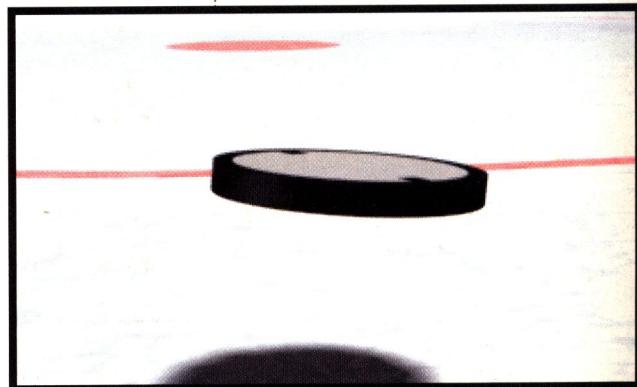
I'll start with *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*; a sort of *FIFA International Soccer* but with weapons. Actually, that's something of a misnomer with regards to these two games as the best aspect of ice hockey – the fighting – is absent from both camps. I remember in my youth playing a game called *Face Off* which carried the subtitle "I went to the fights and a hockey game broke out". How true, I thought, as each game turned from sports simulation to basic *Street Fighter* variant within a matter of minutes. Of course

my playing style didn't help much (abandoning the puck and running at the opponents with my stick held high and chanting a war cry), but the spirit was there. Unfortunately, Brett Hull seems to have gone for the cleaner, family values side of the game and has taken the blood with him. All that is left in the game is the sport. Humph, now where's the fun in that?

Missed directions

Well the fun's certainly not in *Alex Dampier* either, that's for sure. As I said, it plumps for an isometric, *FIFA*-style viewpoint, and as with that much flawed footballing extravaganza, it's all style and no trousers (or hockey masks). The controls are fiendishly difficult to get to grips with, diagonals never being the best of directions for keyboard users, although joysticks don't fare much better. The real trouble is that the players behave as though they're on ice. Yes, I know that sounds like a daft comment, this being ice hockey and all, but let me explain... You are supposed to be controlling adept ice skaters who can turn on a sixpence and control a puck like it was attached to their sticks. But in *Alex Dampier* you (or rather, I) spend most of the game desperately sliding from one side of the rink to the other while trying to change direction, or comically slamming into the wall as though it were a bad episode of *Animaniacs* (not that such a thing could exist).

Brett Hull, on the other hand, is exactly how an ice hockey game should be controlled. For a start it uses a top-down view, thus making things much easier to control and making sure you can see every part of the rink. (Another side effect of Alex's isometric view is that if the puck enters the bottom right corner of the rink, it becomes obscured by the wall around the pitch,



meaning that all your players end up piling into the corner, having not the foggiest idea where the puck is, and comically slam into the wall again.)

Brett's still isn't perfect – your players do still slide around a bit before turning, but not as much. And because the up, down, left and right controls mean up, down, left and right, you have much more control over their direction. In fact, I was actually able to lose games due to a lack of games-playing skill rather than a lack of adequate controls, which would have proved exceedingly frustrating, to say the least.

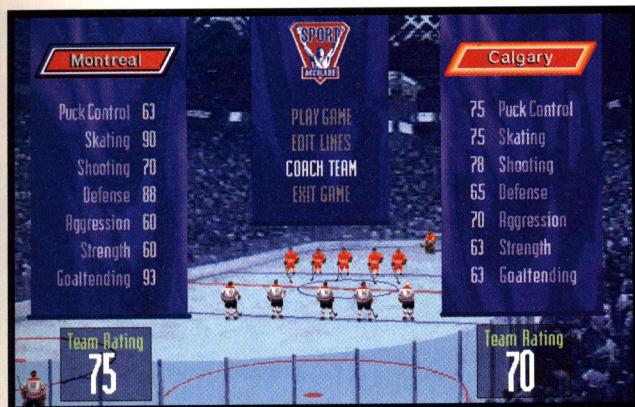
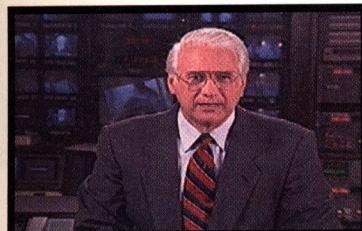
AI's back

I would love to be able to say "What *Alex Dampier* loses in controls, though, it more than makes up for in presentation," at this point, but I can't. I mean, it is nicely presented, with a smashing intro sequence (occurring before the installation



(Left) Alex Dampier's rink-obscuring isometric view tends to restrict play...

(Left) ...whereas Brett Hull's top-down view is far more playable.



	Speed	Techn	Aggres	Stann
01 CEN J ENNERS	✓	✓	✓	✓
02 CEN T HERR	✓	✓	✓	✓
03 CEN C OLLERTON	✓	✓	✓	✓
04 CEN H PASCOL	✓	✓	✓	✓
05 RBN H KELLY	✓	✓	✓	✓
06 RBN B SIMPSONS	✓	✓	✓	✓
07 RBN A REEDLE	✓	✓	✓	✓
08 RBN S HURLEY	✓	✓	✓	✓
09 LBN B WOUTERS	✓	✓	✓	✓
10 LBN T MOELLER	✓	✓	✓	✓
11 LBN H OHLSSON	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 LBN R REYNA	✓	✓	✓	✓
13 DEF L PETSL	✓	✓	✓	✓
14 DEF F MOELLER	✓	✓	✓	✓
15 DEF B RATSETH	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 DEF D FONZEL	✓	✓	✓	✓
17 DEF S KROLIA	✓	✓	✓	✓
18 DEF B HOOP	✓	✓	✓	✓
19 DEF J STEELIS	✓	✓	✓	✓
20 MIN P WILHEUSS	✓	✓	✓	✓

(Far left) Brett Hull prepares for an evenly-matched league game.

(Left) Alex Dampier, being much more of an international kind of bloke, takes on Poland.

procedure surprisingly) and pleasing in game graphics and sounds, but then Brett Hull is much the same and neither of them are more or less impressive than the other.

Both games also have the now-obligatory real-life sports announcers, calling each game as it's played. Alex Dampier loses out here as his man, one Bob Conner, only appears between periods to deliver a state-of-play so far, whereas Brett Hull employs the services of a man who is rapidly becoming a hero of mine. Al Michaels is back and this time he's intelligible. In case Al is new to you (and I think I know him and his wife and two kids in Los Angeles well enough to call him Al by now), he first appeared, to me at any rate, in Accolade's *Hardball 4* last month, sounding like a man with an artificial voice-box. This time round he's offering a play-by-play, running commentary and sounding much better for it. It helps to add to the atmosphere (and understanding) of the game when there's someone explaining all the actions as you're going along.

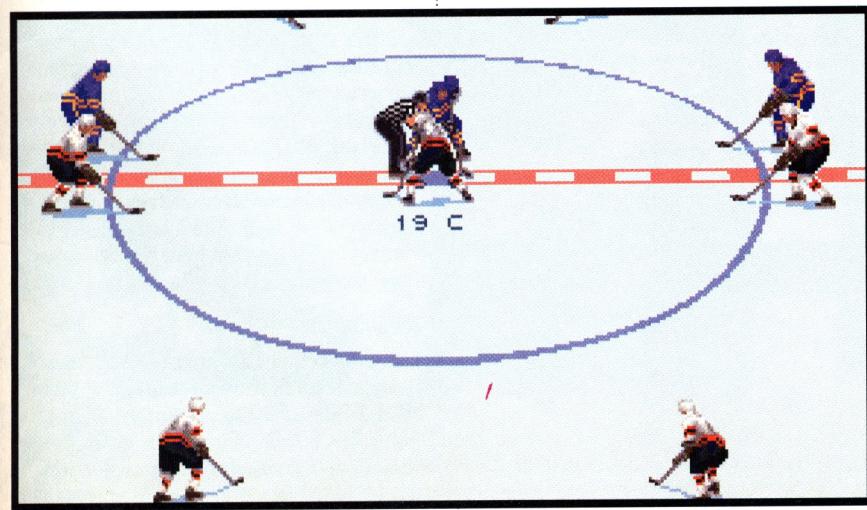
Let's even the score

I wouldn't want this to turn into something of a Brett Hull lovefest, though, so let me

just even the score slightly by saying that Brett is no more innovative with the game of hockey than Alex is. Both of the games have simple move around/shoot and pass controls, and precious little else. All the usual presentation options are there (tournaments, leagues, multi-player exhibitions), and all the usual instant replay and basic team management options, and both are very professional in their approach.

And they're neck and neck...

"So which is the better of the two?" I hear you all cry. Well, I'm going to be slightly controversial here and say neither, really. Yup, you heard me. Neither game is better. Which is not to say they are both as good as each other; rather that neither is as good as *NHL Hockey '95*. If you really want an ice hockey simulation, that's your ticket to satisfaction. Which basically means that we've just wasted your time by spending two whole pages comparing the various merits and faults of two games that are both wholly and completely inferior to a third that was reviewed several months ago. Still, it kept you all reading, didn't it? Who says magazines are dead? ☺



SCORE

Brett Hull:
Looks up to
NHL Hockey '95
but looks down
on Alex Dampier.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 486/33MHz
Hard Disk Space Required: 15Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: SVGA
Sound Cards Supported: All SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard
Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Accolade/Warner Tel: 0171 391 4300



SCORE

Alex Dampier:
It knows its
place.

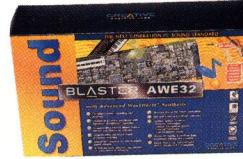
(Left) Somebody plays a cruel joke on Brett Hull by turning up the ice rink temperature prior to the face off. Soon they were all playing water polo.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 386/33MHz
Hard Disk Space Required: 12Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: All SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard
Price: £39.95 Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Merit Software Tel: 0191 460 6060

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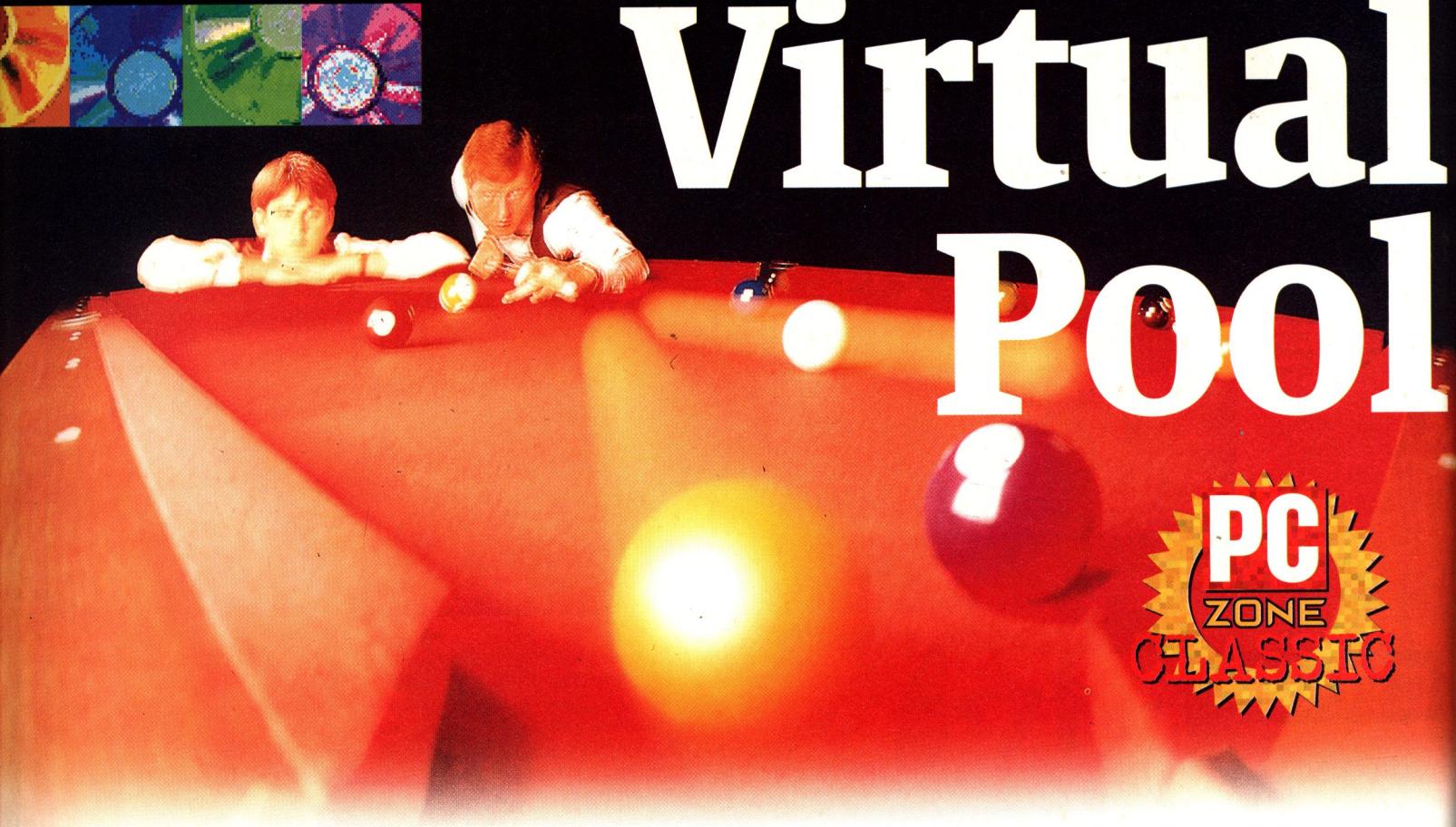
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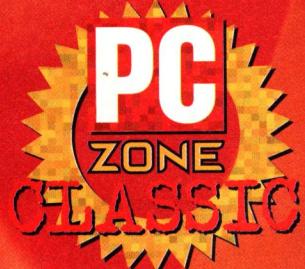
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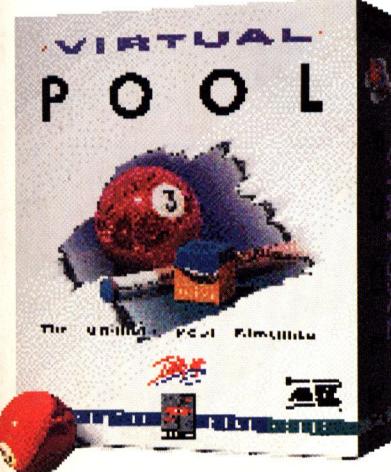
Virtual Pool



"Virgil who?" said Gareth Ramsey when he picked up his review copy. This was one of his better days.

(Above) The game is so damn good, top stick and balls man Steve Davis has put his name to it.

(Below) This is what it'll look like on the shelf. Go and buy it!



First, I have to be quite honest here. When I first heard of the game *Virtual Pool*, set in a virtual bar, I thought it was some sort of dating on the Internet. I suppose the lack of the word "cyber" should have given the game away, though. I mean you can buy Cyber-sex body suits with receptors on the inside to simulate the moves your partner is making in his/her suit at the other end of the phone! Apparently. So, an easy mistake, you'll agree. Well I saw the error in my train of thought, which leads me on to my second point...

Which is... I hate pool sims. I hate pool sims, pinball sims... the lot. They're never anywhere near as good as the real thing and more to the point don't involve going to the pub. Imagine taking the "going to the pub" element out of Friday night and replacing it with the "using a computer to recreate it" element. You'd have a program which took £100 out of your wallet, spent all night going

"Pardon?", "Sorry?" and "God not Freebird, again" and left you waking up going "Shitshitshitshitshit". Hardly likely to catch on now, is it?

So I began to think to myself on the tube home. "There must be something to this game, I mean it's on CD and that. I suppose 'virtual' implies 3D in the style of those other 'virtual' games and I could always read the manual first... nah."

Creating the right atmosphere

So arriving home (picking up two six packs of aggro-lager from Mr Off Licence on the way) I prepared for a night of drinking and pool - what more could a man want for? Installation complete. Here we go. Select "play pool" ... and

well blow me that does look good. The whole room and table are recreated in SVGA and animated as smoothly as you like. The table, the balls, the bar stools, the ceiling fan... s'funny. Where's the bloke insisting that it's winner stays on? But the balls! This engine is so slick it's like watching the real thing. I've never seen such a close simulation in a game. Go for a three ball plant and each ball behaves as one would expect. This game's already looking more than good - it's almost founding its own religion.

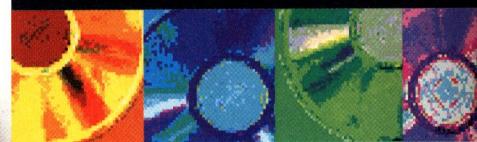
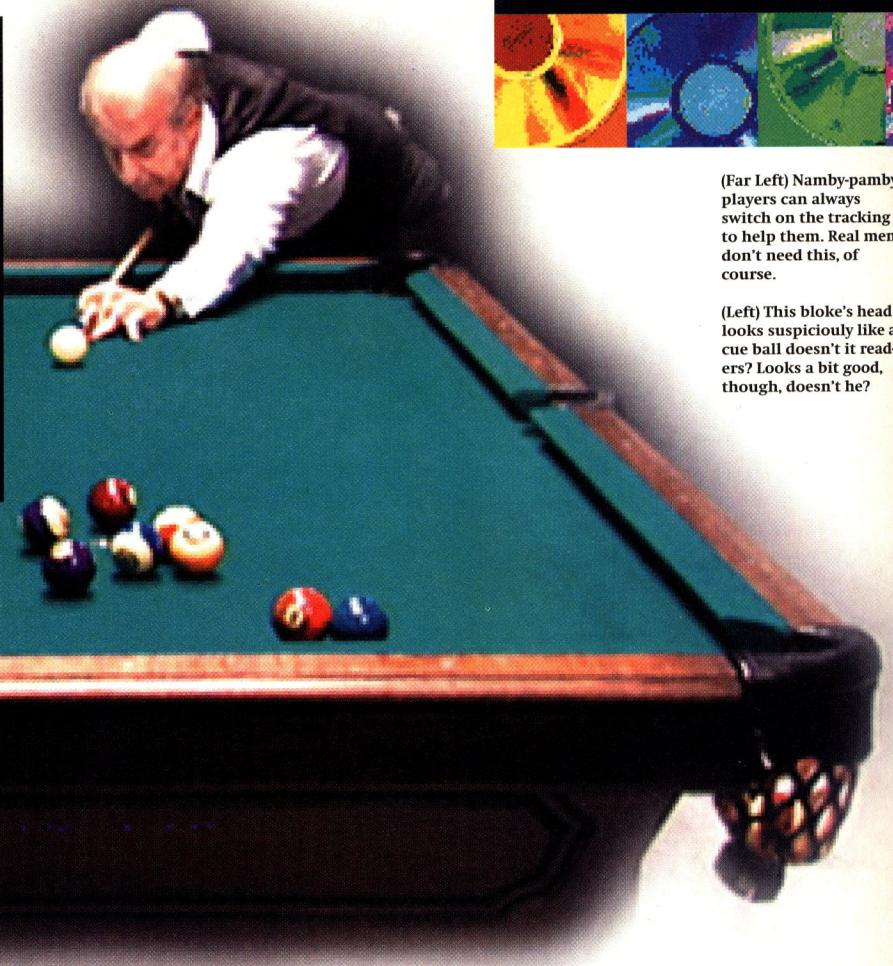
But during this moment of jaw-droppingness, I managed to knock over a can of lager, creating a huge sticky mess all around the edge of my keyboard. "Authenticity!", I cried (in much the same way as Archimedes' shrieked "Eureka!" upon discovering baths).

This is more like it! Only a mere moment had passed before a lit cigarette was balanced on the edge of my keyboard and a line of coins in front of my mouse. "Mouse?", you ask? Yes, and this is the cleverest part of all...



Virtual Pool

CD-ROM REVIEW



(Far Left) Namby-pamby players can always switch on the tracking to help them. Real men don't need this, of course.

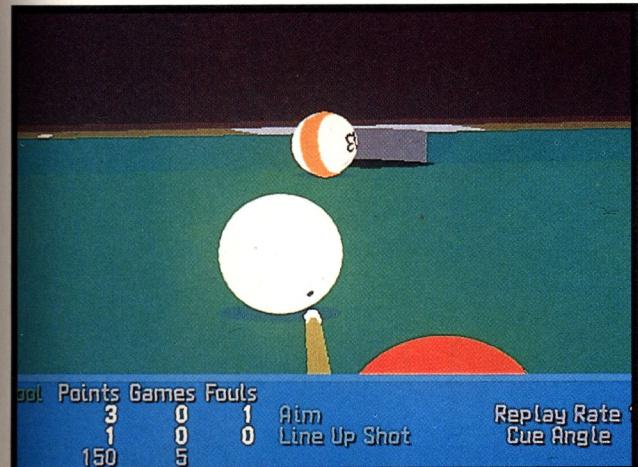
(Left) This bloke's head looks suspiciously like a cue ball doesn't it readers? Looks a bit good, though, doesn't he?

Let loose on yer moose

The mouse is your connection into cyberpool. It's your control. It's your highway into Hooked City. Moving the mouse left, right, forward and back rotates the cue around the cue ball. Click and move for zoom. But here's the sting... press "s", the shoot button, and move the mouse forward and you take a shot, the strength of which depends on the mouse speed. Clever? I'm convinced. Because the animation is so smooth and fast, the void between player and virtual world is bridged with something Brunel would be proud of. Time it right, too, and the coins should go everywhere. Just like real life. Coupled with realistic sound effects for striking, kisses and cushions and, indeed, I found myself hooked.

I decided to have a browse through the manual to see just what this baby was capable of. Spin, or "English" to give it the correct name, can be had without fear of felt ripping or the ball landing in someone's pint. Power shots, fine tuning - they're all here. Everything you could imagine has been included and more.

"More" comes in the form of a number of multimedia "books".



There's an animated history of the game itself in a very Gilliam-esque style. This tells of its beginnings as an indoor lawn game and comes with info on some of the 20th century's greatest players. There's also a pool tutor and literally dozens of trick shots all with accompanying videos. I was liking this more and more. At this point I could almost feel my hair going greasy and a need to buy an all-weather, plastic waterproof with the ability to fold up into its own pocket. I ran from my house and made for my local where I spent an interesting couple of hours with an ostrich called Sfaro (12 cans of aggro-lager does me quite nicely, thank you very much).

The next day

The next day got me thinking (an all-new experience and one I must remember to try again). This game has network play. Two players can play over a network. A quick game of pool before lunch, maybe? Or perhaps a quick afternoon taster, to ready yourself for the real thing come evening? Good idea. However it's the modem link option that scares me. The Compuserve children who hang around the Action games forum chatting "across the net" under names like Dr Axe-Head and other such nom de plumes may never get to see a real pool table. If sims are this good, what in five years? We seem to be changing from a social society to a solitary society where everything will be done from the home, across the "superhighway"... we may never see each other again! ☺

(Below left) Basically the game allows you to play any shot you'd be able to play on a real table such as side spin, back spin, top spin etc. - except it's much easier to control the cue ball.

(Far Left) The physics of the game are very realistic and all the balls behave just how you think they should. It's so realistic in fact, that Steve 'interestin' Davis is putting his name to it.

SCORE

You will *not* be disappointed.
Oh no.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 DX

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA and SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Interplay Tel: 01235 821666



Fantastic monsters, spells, smooth multi-directional scrolling, overhead perspective – what more could you want? Well, a bit of gameplay wouldn't go amiss as far as Andrew Wright is concerned...

DOMINUS



your generals to put troops in areas you tell them to and let them get on with it. Or you can zoom into each area, throw in a few spells (anything from fireballs to earthquakes), deploy monsters individually and even get in the action yourself if you're feeling heroic. Actually, it isn't that heroic because you can always summon your chariot and leg it back home if it gets too hot.

You've got bad taste!

To supplement the bite of cold steel (or claws or whatever), you can mix new spells or build up traps. Both are applied using the mouse – simple point and click. It's fun for a while but it's about as satisfying as lifting out one of those big yellow ducks at the fair – easy ain't the word. If you get bored by your stock of monsters you can mix them up in a melting pot and create new ones with different attack, speed and defence attributes. Charming. Even big,

WITH A NAME like Dominus, I'd half expected US Gold's much overdue release to be either (a) a *Populous*-Powermonger-type clone, or (b) a rip-off of the game you play in the pub with those little black things with spots all over them. Which all goes to show you how wrong you can be. *Dominus* is nothing as classy as (a) and it hasn't got a fraction of the gameplay or the excitement of (b).

So what has it got? In short, *Dominus* is a strategy wargame in a fantasy setting. You're a sort of overlord thing with a big castle, a few villages and some wilderness making up your happy little kingdom, all of which are conveniently divided up into squares. Because you're an overlord thing you have armies made up of monster-type things and your kingdom is under permanent invasion by tribes made up of different monster things that want to steal all your resource-type things. If I sound a little vague, it's because the manual does, too.

With utmost realism, these resource things are left lying all over the place – totally unguarded because the kingdom doesn't have any inhabitants. I suppose it's because they would have got in the way of what somebody thought was a good plot.

And what passes for gameplay, simply boils down to two options. You can instruct

'orrible monsters have feelings, you know.

Information can be gleaned from captured invaders using varying questioning techniques or a red-hot poker, whichever works best. It's borderline bad taste but at least there are no disturbing scenes. On the other hand, options on where to stick the poker might have added excitement...

The interface is well thought out, and most screens are directly accessible from others, so there's no wasted effort involved. The graphics are good and the overhead perspective has two levels of zoom so you can place monsters, traps and spells with accuracy. Amazingly, apart from some neutral background music, there are no sound effects whatsoever. No screams, explosions, and no slurping blood. Add zero gameplay and I'm afraid you can only come up with one answer...

IN PERSPECTIVE

About as exciting as a poop scoop – running out of loo roll is much more fun.

Dark Legions

Conquered Kingdoms

Dominus

SCORE

Good graphics – shame about everything else. Gameplay, sound, music, manual etc.

42

42

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 486

Hard Disk Space Required: Minimal

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse essential

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

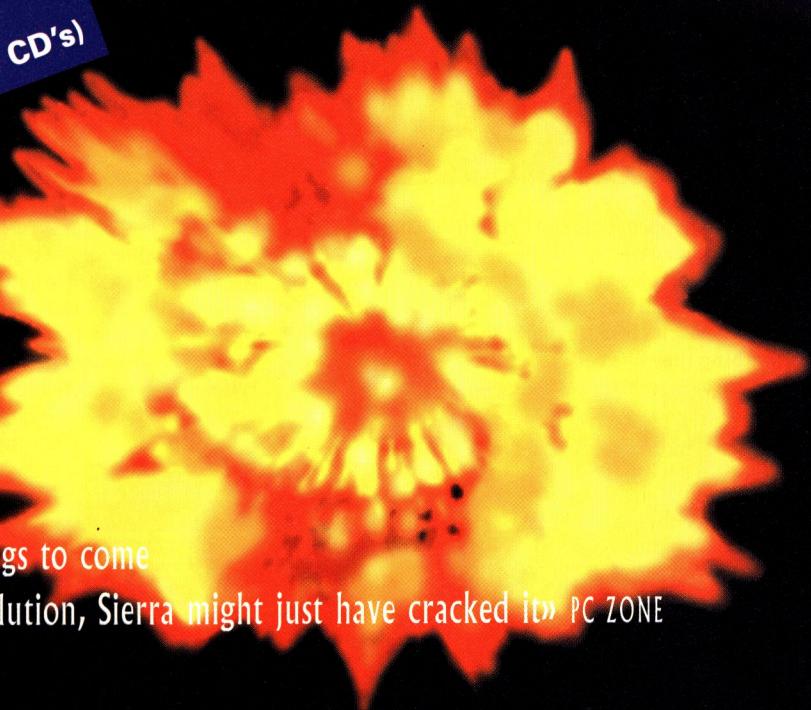
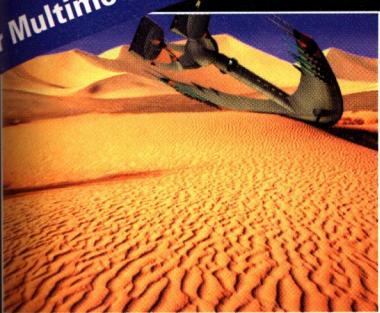
Publisher: US Gold Tel: 0121 606 1800



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S I E R R A ®

Jagged Alliance

Mercenaries aren't as tough as they pretend. Nor is Paul Lakin, which is why we were able to make him stay behind in the office to review *Jagged Alliance* while we all went out to the pub.



t had to happen. First the "new man", now the "new mercenary". Don't be deceived by all the tough talk or those battle scars on improbable parts of their anatomy - mercenaries love trees and children. There's nothing they like better than helping out poor defenceless infants. In barracks the world over they still talk of the terrible time when Jack "The Biscuit" Colquhoun and his entire platoon were wiped out on a sponsored night assault when the spotlight lit up their Comic Relief red noses. Such setbacks have not dampened their enthusiasm for the kiddywiddies. This is why you find yourself on the island of Metavira, talking to Jack Richards (old, wrinkly scientist) and his daughter Brenda (young and completely wrinkle-free scientist). They have been working with the Fallow tree (don't stop now, it gets worse), which has a sap of amazing medical qualities (all the sicky wicky kiddy widdies get better wetter). However, there's a problem with these trees.

Firstly, they don't reproduce (which begs the question how they appeared in the first place), although Brenda is attempting to deal with this. "She's working on a method of reproduction," her father announces in that knowing, man-to-man kind of way of his.

Secondly, the inevitable evil assistant has inevitably seized most of the trees and all of the island. And inevitably you're the one who has to sort it out.

How times have changed for the hard-working mercenary. Once your job was to install evil dictators in small African republics and ensure that their opponents had to draw up the invite list to their funeral rather earlier than they'd have wished. Now you're just the sap who collects the sap. Ah well, this one's for the children.

Risky business

I was all set to say that, ignoring all the packaging, this game is Risk meets *Canon Fodder*. Then the editor says Syndicate. And he's right (as editors always are), and so I'll say it's a case of Risk meets

"...the skirmishes, though fun, are very small scale and come with some fairly tedious bits in between."

Syndicate. Or Midwinter. Or quite a lot of games really.

The overall aim of the game is to regain control of the island and restart the sap extraction process. Not the sort of job you'd boast about at the "Well-Hard Club Dinner Dance", but a man's got to live. The island is divided up into sectors; all but one of which is in the hands of the evil (and almost certainly mad) Lucas Santino. Within each sector is a certain number of trees in various states of health, and locals who can be recruited as tappers (who extract the sap and should, of course, be called sappers),

and guards who hold the sector once you've seized it. This is the strategic element of the game. As you gain control of more sectors, you have to recruit or transfer guards to protect them (Santino is playing the same game as you) and encourage greater production. The money earned from sap

production can be spent on new mercenaries, but you must also pay your staff sufficiently to encourage more recruits and so greater production. But you don't want to know about this. You want to know about the shooting bits.

Kill zone

Each sector is a little battle in its own right. As you enter occupied territory, you move into game time, with each character in your team able to make a certain number of moves per turn (walk, shoot, search, curl up into a little ball and sob etc.). The key here is that you can't see any enemy guards until they're in one of your merc's line of sight, so an idyllic pasture can suddenly become a shooting range. This does wonders for the game's tension quota, believe you me. Even on the lower settings the enemy guards work with a reasonable amount of intelligence - they don't just sit there waiting for you to outflank them. This leads to games of cat and mouse until you have eventually wiped them out, gathered together all the goodies that lay scattered around in true RPG style (particularly the ammo, I've never played a game in which I've run out of ammo so often) and moved on to another sector.

At the end of each day you return back to the base to report to

(Right) This is the bit where you tell them what to carry and what to do with it.

(Centre) This is where they go out to play and talk to strangers.

(Far right) This is where you realise you can't do what you want to do 'cos you've run out of action points - how amusing!



Jagged Alliance

CD-ROM REVIEW



the good doctor, deal with all those tricky personnel problems (i.e. "I'm off. You're a maniac and I'm never working for you again!" "So you'd not be wanting this \$2000 I'm trying to get rid of?" "Ah, on second thoughts perhaps I'll stick around for a bit longer.")

This is also the time to recruit replacements or reinforcements and to get a good night's kip - dreaming of all the good you've done for the sick children (especially the orphans who'll now have a few new friends).

You're the one for me fatty

Something about the packaging of this game led me to expect a pile of old jobbies inside. (Perhaps it was the big label saying "A pile of jobbies inside".) Having read the scenario (well someone has to) I was ready for a real duffer of a game. But wait. In a unique change to my reviewing style I decided to play it before slagging it off (*Incredible, Ed.*). And in a funny kind of way, its not bad. Okay, there's nothing brilliant about it. The graphics and sound are hardly trend setting. There's nothing in the gameplay that hasn't been done before and better. But its one o'clock in the morning, two of my patrol are dead, another is pinned down by a couple of guards and I'm not going home until I've sorted it out.

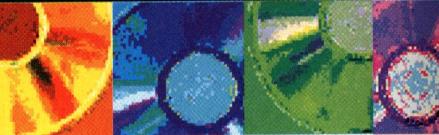
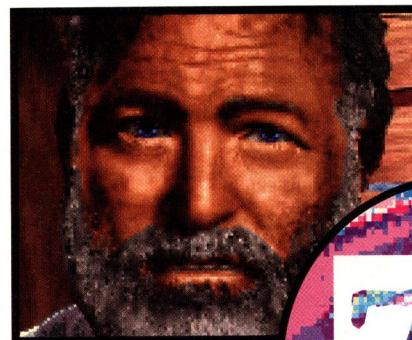
Although not as fast moving as it might be, it is fairly involving. The speech pack is as irritating as these things usually are - chiefly being an excuse for the sort of lame humour that makes Michael Barrymore seem alternative. At times, though, it does give some character to your team. Some react to dangers, such as running out of ammo, with laconic amusement, while others wet themselves.

On the down side, though, the mouse control system can be a pain. The first few skirmishes came to an unhappy end as I gunned down my own troops. Any serious strategy buff will find that side of things a bit thin, while the skirmishes, though fun, are very small scale and come with some fairly tedious bits in between.

Despite all this, *Jagged Alliance* is quite fun in a seen-it-all-before kind of way. If you ignore the scenario, cast a contemptuous sneer at the intro sequence and tell the speech pack that you're just going to get a drink and will be back later, then this is a game you could spend a couple of fun evenings with. **Z**

(Above) It's not all outside action, you get to go indoors as well. Just pray you can get out again!

(Below) Don't think much of the accommodation. This bloke's been here so long he's forgotten to shave!



Do You Want To Be In My Gang?

Of course you don't want to do any of the fighting yourself. Heavens no, you might get hurt. Instead you recruit a team of mercenaries to fight for you. This is where the RPG element slots into the game. There are 60 mercenaries to choose from - each with his own individual characteristics. It's all fairly standard stuff: health, agility, wisdom, plus more modern skills such as marksmanship, explosives and mechanical expertise. Mercenaries have a price per day, and provided you haven't exhausted your budget you can always fly in further recruits later. Its all very familiar - forget the explosives and you could be at the Inn of The Odorous Gannet in the land of Zryxvzandr, looking for heroes to join a quest to the lost golden land of Warnordz.

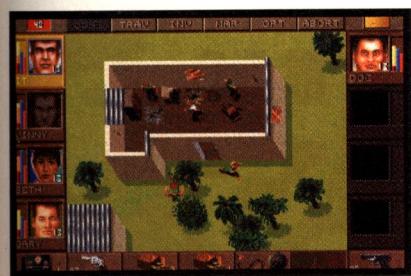
Dr. Ahmad Koolhan	
SALARY: 1750	HEALTH: 83
HEALTH: 74	TRUSTWORTHY: 0
AGILITY: 77	MECHANICAL: 3
DETERITY: 64	BRUTISHNESS: 66
WISDOM: 83	EXP. CLASS: 2

Doc

Doc Koolhan has extensive battle casualty experience with the Red Crescent, Red Cross and as a medical member of R.I.M. His marksmanship, although still relatively weak, has improved considerably over the past couple of assignments.

SCORE

Not new, not special, but not bad for all that.



(Left) You start at the bottom right corner of the island and have to work your way around, completing various missions and killing people as you go.

(Far left) A good thing. You can't automatically see inside a building unless you actually look inside a window or doorway.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 486/33

Hard Disk Space Required: 15-25Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Mindscape Tel: 01444 246333

SIM TOWER

This is Duncan MacDonald's 5000th computer game review introduction, so he thought he'd celebrate by making it a memorable one. Unfortunately, he ran out of ideas on number 2260... Er, how about "Duncan MacDonald reviews Sim Tower from Maxis"? (Pathetic. Ed.)



ASSIVE COINCIDENCE alert! I've just settled down to write this review, and in the background I've got the telly on. "So what?" you may ask. "Where's the coincidence in that?" Well, the subject matter of the tv programme in question just so happens to be skyscrapers. Big deal, though, huh? Why am I mentioning any of this? Well, the reason is that there's just been a quote from one of the most annoying "talking heads" in the entire universe. I missed her name but she is obviously a rampant man-hater (dungarees, Doctor Martins, massive bi-focal spectacles, beard, American). Here's what she just said, and very smugly to boot:

"Skyscrapers disgust me. Their sole purpose is to celebrate the penis. Men are pathetic. It would have been impossible for a woman to invent a structure as ridiculous as a tower block."

Doh! So the ideal structure, to house a large number of people, given a limited floor space... is what exactly? A bungalow? Or maybe just an open-plan "garden area"

with a vegan rest-room and a rebirthing chamber? Stupid cow.

But anyway...

Sorry to have digressed so early in the review, but people like that get so far up my nose it's unreal. I had to vent my spleen somewhere and, unfortunately, it happened here. But with that out of my system it's time to move, very definitely, onto the game under scrutiny - *Sim Tower* from Penit. (*Duncan means Maxis. He's obviously still a bit het up. Ed.*)

Sim Tower is actually extremely easy to pigeon-hole and, ironically, Maxis actually created the pigeon-hole itself, about a squillion years ago. Here goes: *Sim Tower* is *Sim City*, but viewed from the side rather than from the top. In *Sim City* you had a finite playing area and you had to place down residential, commercial and industrial areas in such a way that they didn't all piss each other off too much. Pollution came in the form of smog, and there was the problem of transport connections (road, rail, air). In *Sim Tower* you have



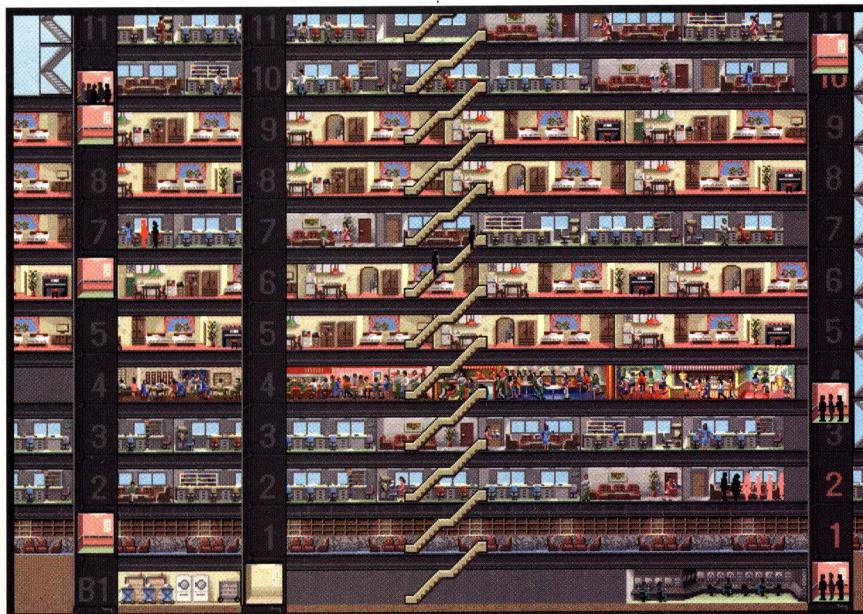
to do much the same regarding the people, shops and industries (offices); only this time round, pollution comes in the form of noise, and transport is, well, staircases, elevators and escalators, basically.

Pass the mogadons...

Wait! Sleeping tablets are not necessarily required! Even though *Sim Tower* is virtually identical to *Sim City* in concept, the challenges involved do tend to pull you in to a slightly more "personal" level. In *Sim City* you were dealing with millions of people. *Sim Tower*, on the other hand, deals with only thousands of people. And as a result, rather less of the gameplay involves studying maps and charts and the like: you're in the game much "closer", as it were. You can click on individual rooms, and even on people, to glean your information (even if it is generally a case of "my neighbours are too noisy").

What are the goals?

Sim Penis (Tower. Ed.). *Sim Tower* is called a "software toy" rather than a game per se. Just like all the other Maxis stuff. In other words, you can just sort of try things out and see how they work, and then try something different the next time round. But essentially, like *Sim City*, you'll still need to satisfy certain game requirements before really progressing. Your main concern,

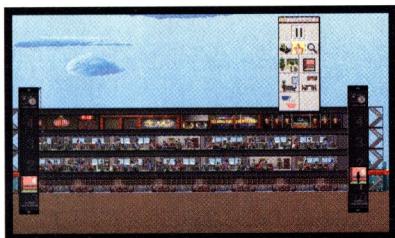


(Left) What a busy tower I've built! Aren't I a clever chappy?

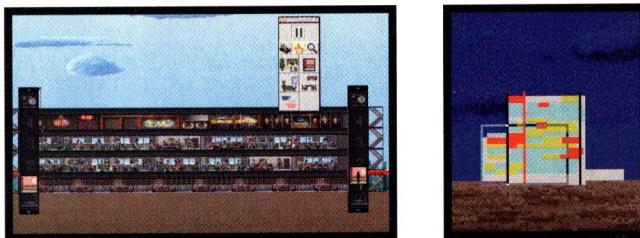
(Below) Darkness falls across the land and all the little simmies are watching Brookside or tucked up in bed.



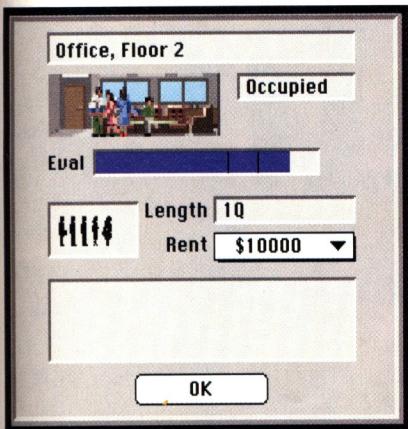
(Right) In the beginning it looked like this. And then it grew and grew into a monstrous carbuncle.



(Below) All was quiet at the PC Zone office.



(Far right) The very complicated elevator control window.



obviously, is money. And this money comes, obviously again, from the people who either buy apartments, or rent offices or shop space. It's a symbiotic thing. (Or, cue unfunny joke, a Sim Biotic thing. Ho ho not very ho.) The better you do – just like in "Sim Everything Else" – the more your inventory swells. Balance everything out correctly and you're given more balls to juggle with, but the more balls you get, the harder it becomes to keep them all in the air at the same time. You know the drill. At the end of the day you need to increase the "star rating" of your block (from one through to five) and also,

as you might have guessed, its height. The ultimate aim is one hundred storeys with a cathedral on top. How wide or narrow the building starts at is down to you, incidentally, but they generally adopt a weird profile as they head for the stars and have to cope with your monumental planning blunders. That's all part of the "fun", though. Play with shapes, basically.

Trainspotters unite

In *Sim City* a roughly equal emphasis was given over to just about everything you did – whether it was property zoning, policing, placing transport systems, or whatever. That was, and still is, part of its inherent beauty. In *Sim Tower*, however, the balance is a tad less honed. Everything is still intertwined, sure, but there's definitely a thick end of the infrastructure wedge, which involves the elevators (or lifts, if we're being British here).

Here's the problem:

Sim Tower takes a certain element from both *Railroad Tycoon* and, more latterly, the brilliant *Transport Tycoon*. I'm talking about junctions and timetables and stuff. During the first stages of your tower you just need

a couple of lifts, which go up and down to whichever floor requests them. Just plonk them in and leave them alone. As things progress, however, you begin to wish you had Carol Vorderman's phone number, because the elevator control window would not look at all out of place in a MENSA test.

As I write this I realise that the difficulty factor involved in *Sim Tower*'s elevator placement is a sort of double-edged sword; provoking the question of whether or not the increased difficulty adds to the addictiveness of the game as a whole. And the answer, as far as I can make out, is that it might very well do if the graphics were better – and you could actually see what was going on.

The Graphics

Assuming you've got the right Windows drivers (I didn't and went through several hours of bemused hell before finally giving up and using one of the office PC's), we're talking 256 colours in SVGA. It's all very "flat looking", though (as you can see). The various offices and lobbies and suchlike are all very "clear", sure, but sometimes "clear"

isn't good enough.

It's quite hard to explain exactly why this is, but just take my word for it... you simply don't get a sense of what exactly is going on in your building and everything

just looks like a confusing mess. The stick-like figures zap about in accelerated time, going from one location to another, but never do you really feel as if you're in on the action in a particularly big way, either.

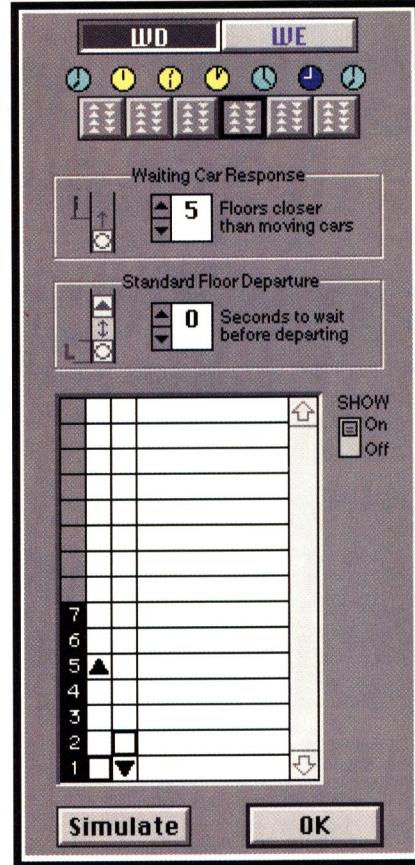
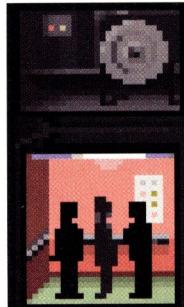
Er, I think what I'm actually trying to say is that the graphics are pretty crap.

Control freak

The point-and-click mousey routines in *Sim Tower* are also a bit suspect. They work and all that, don't get me wrong, but it all feels rather sloppy and jerky. In other words, it's very easy to miss your placement points, meaning that the two-bed hotel room you just plonked down is an annoying four pixels away from its intended position. This forces you into being "careful" – meaning that you can't zap about the screen at your own speed like you could in *Sim City*, but instead have to pussy-foot around like a tossy old git. As you can imagine, it's rather frustrating, to say the least.

So, what's the score?

A lot of reviewers are probably going to give *Sim Tower* a real slagging off for being the nth in the series. Backlash city. However, I



personally don't see that as being the problem. I reckon *Sim Tower* could have been as excellent as the original *Sim City* if the graphics had been bigger, and if some sort of "humour" had been added. (Basically, take the best parts of *Theme Park*, add them to a visually reconstructed *Sim Tower*, and you'd probably have a winner.)

As it stands, however, *Sim Tower* is just sort of "okay" in a retro sort of way, with loads of annoying bits. Just like the Post Office Tower, actually. (Eh? Ed.)

SCORE

70

Pretty addictive if you can be bothered, but the presentation is ghastly.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

(3Mb XMS essential)

Minimum Processor: 286 16MHz

(386 33MHz recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 9Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib,

SoundBlaster compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

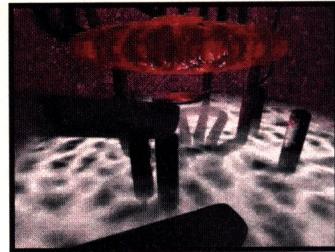
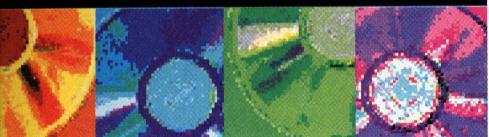
Comments: DOS 5.0 or above required;

Hayes-compatible modems supported;

132-column printers supported.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Maxis **Tel:** 0171 490 2333



The Daedalus Encounter

Patrick McCarthy was once trapped in a spaceship heading inexorably towards the sun. He escaped with just a few singed body hairs and a new-found respect for his underarm deodorant.

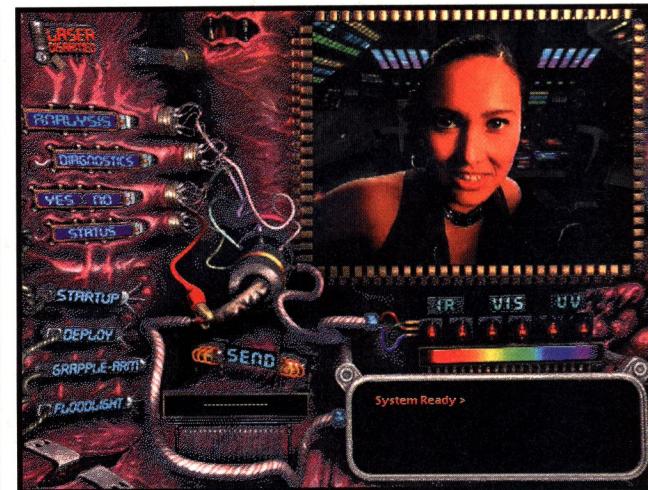


AEDALUS, THE SYMBOL of inventiveness personified, constructed the Labyrinth at Crete in which the Minotaur was imprisoned; shortly after that he became the symbol of fast-talking salesmen, convincing his son Icarus that a handful of chicken feathers stuck to an old carpet would make the ideal holiday transportation. You might think, from this, that *The Daedalus Encounter* is based on some kind of spooky meeting with this purveyor of poor-quality hang-gliders in a carpet warehouse or battery chicken establishment. You'd be wrong.

It's 2135, and you are Casey O'Bannon, space gunner. You're patrolling with your chums, Ari (who - fascinatingly - is played by Tia Carrere, the "babe interest" from *Wayne's World*) and Zack (who isn't). You and your fellow crew members are involved in a heated argument about whether anyone really needs a lycra bra in low-gravity situations, when you're attacked without warning by Vakkars. Vakkars are like that: they never warn anyone - hoping, apparently, to catch their enemies with their bras in their hands. Being attacked by Vakkars is about as welcome a proposition as being stuck in a lift with Gyles Brandreth. Nevertheless, you don't lack pluck, and you switch your guns on and proceed to smite them hip and thigh as if there's no tomorrow.

Property of Casey O'Bannon

Which for you, there isn't. The Vakkars break through your withering hail of fire™ to hit your ship, and you and your still-bickering chums have little choice but to eject, fastening various items of underwear as you go. The last thing you see is a large chunk of



spaceship heading straight at you. It hits you smack in the... well, everything, really. And not only is there no tomorrow, there's no next week, or next month either. When you eventually regain consciousness, several of your earth months later (earthling), your health seems to have taken a slight turn for the worse. You don't seem to have any legs. Neither, for that matter, do you have any arms. Or any armpits, nostrils, nipples, eyes or skin. In fact, all that is left of you after your collision with the space debris is a brain, in a box. Still, look on the bright side. Your migraine's cleared up.

The war's over. Ari (who, astonishingly, is played by Tia Carrere from *Wayne's World*) and Zack (who isn't) have stolen you from the laboratory where you were being held, in the hope that you'll join them in their new career as intergalactic salvage merchants. You have little say in the matter - mainly because you don't have any lips. Or a tongue. But then, you wouldn't be able to say anything even if you did just have a tongue. Apart from "la", and that wouldn't do you any good, would it? Unless you were pointing at something in French. (*Get on with it. Ed.*)

So, being unable to refuse, off you go together - you in your new body, which is a sort of fish tank/can opener combination - and they in their old ones, which are sort of muscle, skin and bone combinations (with a dash of lycra - some people just never listen).

Along with the aforementioned brain-in-a-barrel arrangement, you have a "pod" over which you have remote control, which provides you with your view of the action (since you're stuck on the ship in your jar) and which you're supposed to utilise to solve the problems that will appear during the game. Because *The Daedalus Encounter* is a game. Sort of.

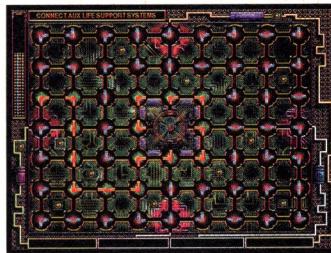
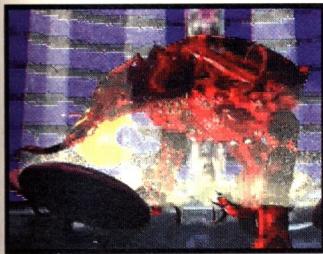


(Above right) Blimey, if it isn't that bird from *Wayne's World*.

(Right) And she can even party on with a gun.

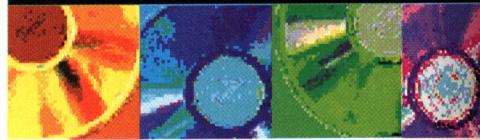
The Daedalus Encounter

CD-ROM REVIEW



(Far left) The monster struggles to get his satellite dish to work.

(Left) An ancient tapestry masquerading as a complex puzzle.



Hanging with Mister Spaceship

Unfortunately, no sooner do you set underway (equipped with a brief training mission to get you accustomed to the controls) than your ship crashes into, and becomes hopelessly entangled with, a huge organic ship. This ship is heading straight for a binary star's corona (note the restrained lack of fizzy pop jokes), taking you along with it. The only way to save yourselves is to board the ship and alter its course.

By now the game is well and truly under way. It's just a matter of recognising the fact. Because this, unfortunately, is one of those much despised, new-fangled "interactive movies". And we all know what that means, don't we? - sitting in front of the monitor for hours, watching a Quicktime movie.

Look at the lenses on that

It tries to pretend that you have things to do. You have nominal control of your pod: if you watch the movie in reduced view, you have a range of commands to click on; watch it in full view and you have keyboard shortcuts, but no on-screen indication of what you have done. But neither keyboard-press nor icon-click work unless the game situation demands it, and, in fact, you can't actually do anything until you're told to. The pod flies about of its own accord, framing the action from your viewpoint, as well as (confusingly) appearing in the background. (Now we know why Tia insists on lycra - let's hear it for Bra-Cam™.) The worst thing is that you can't even shoot anything when you're bored because your laser is deactivated until the very moment you need it.



So there you sit, watching two actors pretending to interact with computer-generated special effects. Admittedly, it's not as mind-numbing as the recently-reviewed Hell (never was a game more aptly-named) - the script, acting and plot are at least mediocre.

You're on...

Every now and then the actors will turn to you and ask you to help them out; essentially, this means you have to solve a puzzle that's been artificially grafted over the top of the movie to make it last longer. Usually they will take the form of single-screen, spatial reasoning problems, but you might (calm down) occasionally have something to shoot with your temporarily-activated laser. Other "puzzles" are merely trials of patience.

The game makes three assumptions: one is that you'll somehow know, unprompted, what you should do in any given situation, however vague; the second is that when you realise how little there actually is to do, you'll want to persevere. An awful lot of time and money has obviously been spent on it - as we're repeatedly told in the reviewers' promotional video, it's basically one long special effects film. Graphically, it's outstanding, and the script and acting are bearable. If Virgin had used the same material to make something like one of the LucasArts adventures, or even something like *Myst*, with puzzles a little more in keeping with the game, it'd be onto a winner. Instead, the acting stops every now and then to stick a few logic puzzles in front of you. Have I mentioned that Tia Carrere, the woman from *Wayne's World*, is in it? (I'm not sure... Ed.) Because that's the third assumption the game makes: that sad people will buy it just because she's in it. Which makes it the gaming equivalent of one of those awful puzzle magazines with a picture of a bikini-clad "sexy chick" on the front.

Daedalus Encounter is, indeed, a technical achievement, and it looks very nice, but, basically, it's a crap game.

(Above left) It's a huge red monster, but isn't that the babe from *Wayne's World*?
(Above right) In the heat of battle there's always time for a spot of disco-dancing.



SCORE

Tia Carrere's in this, you know.

Minimum Memory: 8Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 486/33 DX

Hard Disk Space Required: 4Mb (min)
25Mb (max)

Graphics Modes Supported: Accelerated VLB
or PCI SVGA 256 colours

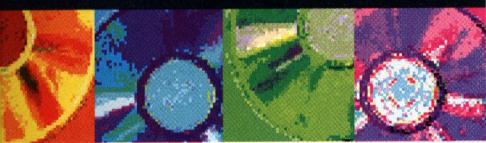
Sound Cards Supported: 8-bit Windows
compatible

Controls: Mouse

Comments: CD-ROM double-speed drive
necessary

Price: £44.95 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Virgin Tel: 0181 960 2255



(Above) You can find out all of the important information about a planet from government to economy.

(Top) One of the game's new fangled twisty-turny, space-station things.

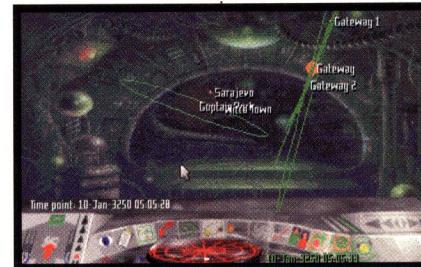
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EW GAMES generated such fanatical loyalty as *Elite*. Even fewer games generated so much expectation as the five-years-in-the-making sequel *Frontier*. There aren't many games that have generated such a storm of hate mail on CompuServe as the one-year-in-the-waiting sort of sequel *Frontier: First Encounters*. It wasn't so much what the game lacked that was the problem; it was more what it had in the way of bugs. However, more about those later. (There's nothing you can teach me about keeping your audience in anticipation – I've been on creative writing courses, you know.)

Part two and a half

Although *First Encounters* is undeniably a complete game in its own right (and seemingly as vast as its predecessor), it's not really a sequel. To be fair, it doesn't really pretend to be – it's not labelled *Elite III* – however, it's still disappointing how little has changed from *Frontier*. The game is set 50 years after that game and this allows for some technological changes (better weaponry/technology and the like), but essentially the game is the same. Which means it is whatever you want it to be. As a freewheeling space jock (or jockette) you can choose to simply trade between planets, building up

(Right) Graphically the game is a bit gaudy to be honest, but the design of the ships is now significantly more impressive.



The *Elite* series of games has the sort of popularity saddoes like Paul Lakin can only dream about. He took *First Encounters* out for a spin to check the secret of its success.

First

your income (and hence, your craft) and doing your best to stay out of trouble. Alternatively, you can dabble in a bit of crime and politics (What's the difference?) carrying out smuggling, assassinations and any other skulduggery you fancy getting involved in. This approach obviously makes for a more rewarding and exciting life. It also increases the chances of you getting bounced by a Police Squadron just as you were reaching for the Hyper Space button. "Oh bugger it!" you cry. Partly because dying is such an overrated pastime, but mainly because the combat sequences in *First Encounters* are a pile of old jobbies.

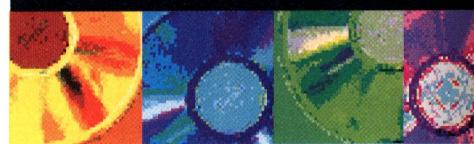
Shot to pieces

Right – I suppose I ought to get all the qualifications out of the way first: Cub Scout Bronze Arrow, Blue Peter Badge, War Lord Secret Agent Stamp, CSE Physics... sorry, not those sort of qualifications. The "Don't write in and tell me..." sort. I know there's a lot more to the *Elite* game than the graphics. It's the scope and sheer size of the game that give it its class. But, there is combat in it, it can take up a lot of playing time and, well, it's crap. It's better than the previous games but still way off the pace compared to its contemporaries. Not only are the graphics sub-X-Wing (and that's two-years old) but the combat system manages to be both simplistic and difficult. Technological advances be damned – for all the use the radar and combat computers are in *Encounters* I'd rate my chances higher if I was in a Sopwith Camel with a good pair of goggles.

Same as it ever was?

It would be wrong to claim that *First Encounters* was no different than *Frontier*. The graphics, control system and combat have all been improved to some extent without any of them becoming outstanding. The controls are the most marked improvement, but I'm afraid I still have a gripe with the navigation system (and this dates back to the earlier games). In the future, will navigation really rely on scouring a star map, trying to find the sodding planet (a task made no easier by having a 3D map)? I don't think it would take too much away from the spirit of the game if you were able to type in your destination and either set course for it or at least have it highlighted on the map.

Other improvements on the CD version are simply window dressing and, like most window dressing, adds little to the actual product. My heart sank when I saw a "Video Actors" credit in the title sequence. They serve you in shops, they offer you work, they challenge you to fights, but most of all they're just a pain in the arse.



Frontier: Encounters

Not only is the acting appalling – so is the information. "They're desperate for robots in there, you'll make a killing if you've got any with you," I was told in one market. Strange this, since the planet I was on was one of the major robot exporters in the galaxy with current robot stocks of 192. Perhaps he was just being ironic. That old sentimental Mark raved about *Elite II* because it could be played straight from the disk. *First Encounters* the cd, however, has lost that quality without gaining too much on the way.

Silly bug(ger)s

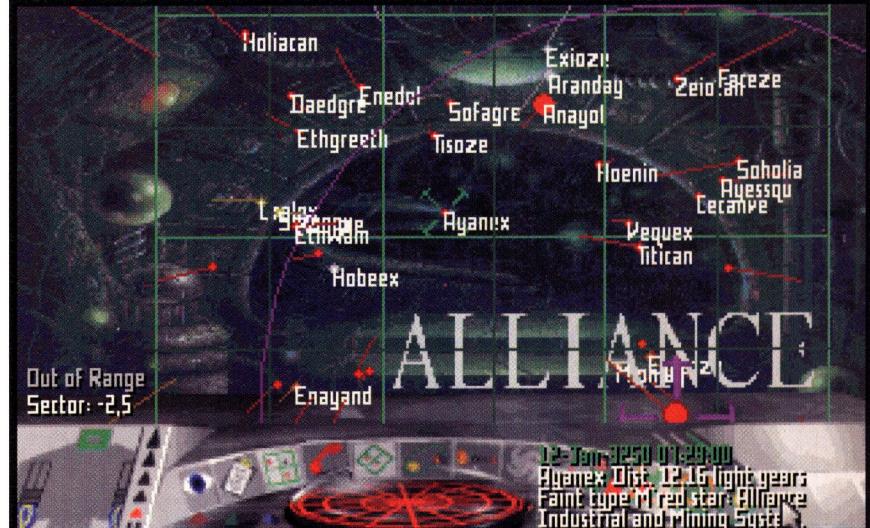
As I said earlier, CompuServe has been humming with complaints concerning the bugs in *First Encounters*, ranging from the serious; frequent crashes, inaccessible missions, immunity in combat, to the silly; "actors" having the wrong voices, getting paid infinite amounts for some missions. Gametek duly issued a patch, and it has to be said that the version I played was not too bad (though the problem of being immune to enemy lasers still seemed to be there). However, such teething problems don't inspire much quality. As the game's creator David Braben acknowledged, a game of such vastness is bound to have some hidden problems. Fair enough. But it's one thing to come across a distant planet where all the men talk like women, but for the game not to work with SoundBlaster!

Thankfully, things have now been sorted out, and any copies you buy in the shops from now on will be pretty much bug-free. However, it's a sad fact that early adopters to the game (i.e. the people who love *Elite*) had to suffer.

On the subject of sound, *Encounters*, like its forebear, has a range of irritating classical music. Actually, that's a bit unfair. At times I was quite happy coasting over planets with *The Blue Danube* playing gently in the background. However, there is a time and a place for everything and eventually you try and switch the music off. Fine – until you restore a game and back it comes, that is. In fact, I got so fed up with constantly going back to the control panel to switch the music off (sometimes it just kicked in for no apparent reason) I was half tempted delete the SoundBlaster patch.

So it's crap then?

No. I realise I seem to have spent the last two pages just slagging the game off, but it's going to get a reasonable score. Why the contradiction? Well partly because it's late and I can't be bothered to go back and change the whole review, but chiefly because the strengths of *First Encounters* are the strengths of its predecessor's, which are its vast scope and the player's freedom to make each



(Above) The 3D map is a bit confusing, to say the very least.

(Below) The acting, to be brutally honest, is absolutely dreadful.

game unique. *First Encounters* offers more adventures and challenges, but it doesn't offer much in the way of more sophistication. For *Elite* fans, that need not be a problem. In fact, *Elite* rather reminds me of the early SSI games: to their fans they were engrossing, life dominating adventures; to their detractors, increasingly dated-looking pieces of programming history. *Elite*'s attempt to widen its appeal is rather half hearted. (But, then, why should that matter – *Frontier* sold by the lorry load.) I'm afraid I feel a cliché coming on: Plenty there for fans of *Frontier* but little to win over new converts.

But even fans should ensure they get a version with the required patches. □



SCORE

It's good but doesn't add all that much to *Frontier*.

Minimum Memory: 4MB RAM
Minimum Processor: 386DX 25MHz
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: No major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Gametek **Tel:** 01753 553445



Manchester United do it again; put its name to yet another distinctly average footie game, that is. Jeremy Wells's our man in the Palace stant, wearing body armour, went to catch some fish.



Man Utd: The Double



UST ABOUT every review of Manchester United: Premier League Champions (M.UTD: PLC) came to the conclusion that it wasn't bad, but not as good as a certain game by Sensible, even though it looked and played very similarly.

Since then, we have had the overtly *Sensi*-esque Football Glory from Kompart, which also lacked that vital ingredient; whilst there's Striker '95 from Warner; the graphically superb Actua Soccer from Gremlin Interactive; and the distinctly console-like Action Soccer from Ubisoft to look forward to come the summer.

Whether Sensible will actually manage to get the PC version of *Sensible World of Soccer* working properly come the start of the new season is anyone's guess. Apparently, it's still having problems with the 3D isometric view and the speed, so there's a good chance it may include a European Championship '96 option by the time it finally makes it onto the PC.

License to milk

Krisalis on the other hand, didn't seem to have any problems with adding a 3D isometric viewpoint, or the speed for that matter. It even took it upon itself to add a full-team management game with just about every team you have ever heard of (Accrington Stanley, Harriers, Kidderminster etc., etc.); an up-to-date transfer market; and a rather splendid game editor which lets you fiddle with the extensive stats of every player and team in the vast data-base. In fact, it's so versatile that you could, say, re-create the Scottish League (if the mood took you) whilst you can change players names, their appearance and even edit home and away kits, so you're never out of date. The latter feature being an especially useful addition when you bear in

mind Manchester United's penchant for new strips.

Although there is a fully up-and-running transfer market, player values are based on how valuable the computer thinks players are, rather than current commercial values (there's an actual value and a recommended bit). This can lead to some rather amusing anomalies, and if you don't use a player for some time, his value drops, which means you can pick up some bargains.

As before, the level of presentation is high and the menu system, though not as instantly accessible as *Championship Manager*, is more than adequate, especially when you consider that M.UTD: PLC is primarily an arcade game, rather than a simulation. You can choose to just play as a manager, but the fun really is in playing each match out yourself.

Like a trawler throwing out fish

There's nothing much missing when you actually play a match, and the new angle means you actually get to see more of the pitch, even if it is a little more difficult to judge exactly where the ball is going to end up. It's still pretty smooth, the AI is competent, and although the players seem to skate over the pitch, they move pretty well.

The control system is the same as before (instead of applying bend and height after you've struck the ball à la *Sensi*, this is done whilst you're still holding the fire button) and actually allows for better passing moves, even at speed, so it's definitely worth getting used to.

White result

As a result of these improvements, matches (especially two-player games) become more tactical and you find yourself spending more and more time juggling players, positions and (gulp) set plays on the brilliantly conceived Tacti Grid.

SQUAD		TEAM		FORMATION	
1	Boncho Guentchev	1	Craig Forrest	1	5
11	Alex Mathe	2	John Vark	2	15
18	Ian Marshall	3	Neil Thompson	3	19
23	Lee Chapman	24	Maurice Tanico	4	3
24	Maurice Tanico	1	Craig Forrest	21	24
26	Adrian Paz	2	Frank Yallop	6	6
5	John Vark	3	Chris Swales	14	14
3	Neil Thompson	4	Stuart Slater	11	11
21	Stuart Slater	5	David Linghan	9	9
15	Chris Swales	6	Boncho Guentchev	21	21
19	Frank Yallop	7	Alex Mathe	11	11
14	Steve Sedgley	8	Steve Sedgley	0	0

PLAYER STATS
SOUSSTITUTIONS
Penalty Taker: 11
Defensive Free Kick: 5
Attacking Free Kick: 9

Pre-Match

(Above) The quite brilliant Tacti-Grid. If only Ipswich Town had such a wonderful tactical planner and followed the above example.

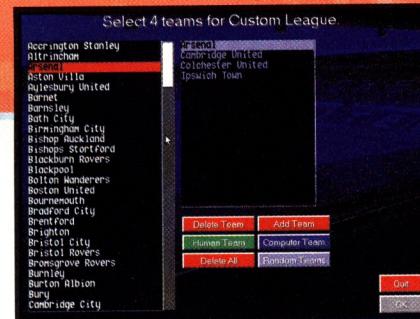
M.UTD: PLC is not as comprehensive as the play editor featured in the Amiga version of *Sensible World of Soccer*, but it still enables you to play the way you want to and save various formations and tactics for rainy days. You even start to use your wingers, rather than banging it up the middle all the time (unless, of course, you're a Wimbledon supporter), which so often becomes the only winning tactic in *Sensi*.

And the result after extra time? Well, it's not a cash in (now there's a first for Man United); more an improved version of what was originally an average game. ☺



SCORE

The best Man United game yet, but still lacking that vital *Sensi* something.



(Far left) Choose from four different kits or design your own (useful for Man United fans).

(Left) Create your own league or play with the "big boys". The massive database is a Stato's heaven.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386SX
(DX recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 4 to 5Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, gamepad

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Krisalis Tel: 01709 372290

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Alien Breed: Tower Assault

Team 17's classic shoot 'em up gets a complete overhaul. Chris Anderson is long overdue one. Who better than...

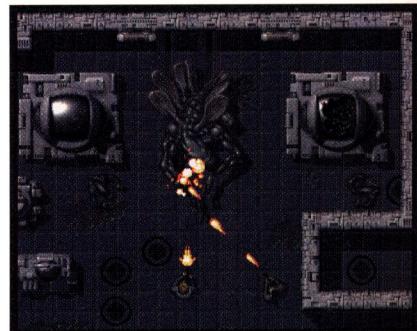
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LIEN BREED. Hmm! Isn't that the game that everybody raved about on the Amiga that turned out to be totally crap on the PC? Methinks it is. Well, it certainly hasn't put the bogs at Team 17 off having another go, because here they are again with *Alien Breed 2: Tower Assault*.

The first thing I saw when I loaded up the game was an awful intro with extremely dodgy video clips showing pilots homing in

buy better weapons, key-packs, tools and armour to help you along your way. A few new features have been added that weren't in the original game, though.

There are new end-of-level guardians, dark areas where you can't see the aliens very well which makes things trickier, and the ability to move backwards while firing forwards. This is particularly useful in two-player mode. You can wade into the aliens while your mate covers your back. But, although it may sound like all you're getting for your money is more of the same with a few tweaks, there are



(Above) More rash behaviour - your men try their luck with a triceratops look-alike.

(Left) Just one of the rather more inviting creatures you'll come across on your mission.



on an alien-infested colony, and a few "actors" demonstrating just how bad digitised voice-overs can be if you try really hard. Not a good start! The plot hasn't changed much from the original game either. A nasty alien lurking in a military base eats lots of rats, gets really fat, bursts open and showers the base with little aliens who then proceed to attack the occupants of the base. Your job is to kill the lot of them and then sort out the alien queen at the end.

As for the gameplay, if you've played the first *Tower Assault* you'll know pretty much what to expect from this one. You run around

the place shooting at things; collecting first-aid kits to "heal" you when you're a bit wrecked; looking for keys to open doors; and collecting credits which you can spend on the many computer consoles lying around the levels. When you access the consoles, you can

reasons for buying *Tower Assault* rather than the original. The graphics are excellent (even better than the Amiga version) and the in-game sound effects are pretty good, too. Having played the original *Alien Breed* on Amiga, I was bitterly, bitterly disappointed in the PC version. Team 17 has not made these mistakes this time around and, consequently, it's a good-looking, addictive shoot 'em up, and with over 50 levels to get through, you'll be kicking alien butt for a long time to come.

Incidentally, the game crashed on me a couple of times. Now this didn't happen often and didn't bother me too much, but you might want to call Team 17 to see if there's a patch for the problem .



SCORE

**Fast-paced,
addictive shoot
'em up.**

Minimum Memory: 2Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 DX 33

Hard Disk Space Required: Negligible

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

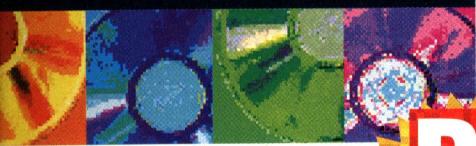
Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster, Gravis Ultrasound

Controls: Joystick, gamepad

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Team 17 **Tel:** 01924 385903

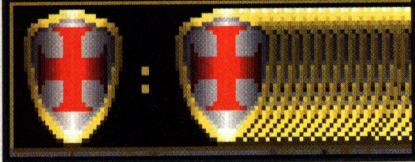




(Above) Before dabbling in the murky world of beat combos, Take That honed their skills in the murky world of political intrigue.

**PC
ZONE**
RECOMMENDED

Machiavelli the Prince



Six whole years of computer games reviewing experience and Paul Presley still can't come up with a decent intro joke for a strategy game.



(Above) Auntie Ethel drops by for a nice informal chat.



KAY, time for a little history test. Hands up all of you who have heard of Niccolò Machiavelli before. Come on, put them up. Not one of you? Sigh, typical really. What was I thinking? You're all well and good when it comes to reciting Wu Tang's special moves in *Gang Killer 39 Turbo*, but ask anything about world history and you're about as much use as a guidebook to Swanage. What are they teaching kids these days?

Game review... take two

Forget the history lesson, then. All you need to know about *Machiavelli the Prince* is that it's a *Civilization*-style strategy game set in the 14th century (that's lost another 60 percent of you); you have to explore the world in sailing ships (there goes the techno-brigade); engage in historical politics (so long to anyone under 18); and it's actually very, very good. So who am I left with? University students without dates and some old man who just wandered in to keep out of the rain. Well, at least we know what the target audience is.

That's perhaps the only problem *Machiavelli* faces – finding an audience. Which is a shame because, as I said, it's a very good game indeed. Very challenging, highly addictive once you've sat down with it, and everything that *High Seas Trader* should have been but wasn't (even if it doesn't have a pseudo-Doom-style sailing section).

I'm not going to harp on about the graphic quality, since this never seems to be an issue with strategy games, although I would dearly love a programmer at some point to say, "Right, there's the Hyper-Accurate Artificial Intelligence routine sorted, now where's the Silicon Graphics workstation and those rendered visuals?" It'll never happen, of course, but we live in hope.

I'm still he... urgh

Other than that, *Machiavelli* is excellent. It manages to combine both world exploration (either the real 14th century globe – or "disc" as they thought it was back then – or a randomly generated one) with cunning political savvy. And I'm not talking about pointless bickering sessions between opposing political parties but real politics. Violent politics. Treacherous politics. A smile, a policy and a dagger up the strap politics. If your opponent is getting too powerful, kill him. If you want to control elections, bribe the senators to vote for you. If you want the church's mighty (and



profitable – these are the days of the Inquisition, after all) influence, buy some cardinals.

All the time you are juggling this internal strife with the need to barter with foreign cities, to set up trade routes that bring in the cash and to fend off natural enemies like storms at sea, plagues wiping out cities and bands of pirates and mercenaries looking for a quick florin.

Basically, I'm thoroughly impressed with *Machiavelli* but saddened by the knowledge that it's going to struggle to find itself a large audience. It's cut itself off from the shores of mass

appeal due to its subject matter, and without superficial niceties, such as glorious animations and other special effects, it's not likely to find its way back. Still, I've got my copy, so what do I care? Who knows, thanks to its unique play-by-e-mail feature, maybe it'll find itself alive and prosperous on the Internet. Maybe it'll be a trendsetter, a bandwagon builder.

Maybe. ☒



SCORE

The best Civilization game since Civilization.

(Below) Mr. Blobby finally gets the fate he deserves. Right, where's Edmonds?



Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 MHz

Hard Disk Space Required: 10Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Price: £44.99 approx. **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: MicroProse Tel: 01454 326532

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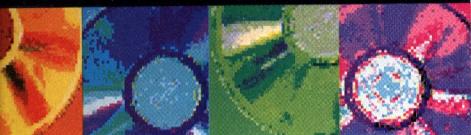
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Chaos Control

It takes a long time for our sweet-natured, butter-wouldn't-melt-in-his-mouth Charlie Brooker to lose his cool, but showing him *Chaos Control* proved like a red rag to a bull.



KAY. Let's get things straight right from the start. I'm angry. This game has got me spitting bile. I really, really, *really* want to slag it off. I want to slag it and slag it and slag it until it starts bleeding. And that's exactly what I'm going to do. But before I let fly with my rapid-fire abuse cannon, I suppose I'd better explain why.

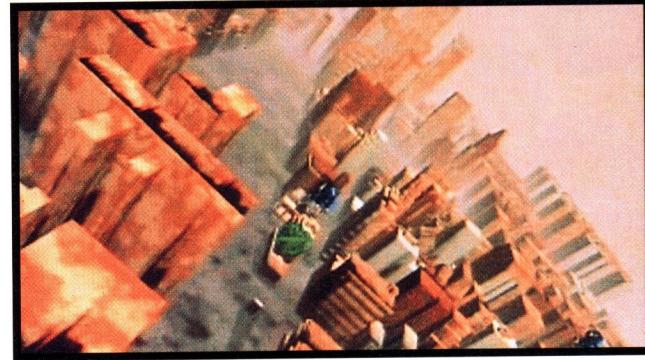
CD-i? CD-arse, more like

First things first. *Chaos Control* originally appeared on the Philips CD-i, and was, by all accounts, a great success. Don't be fooled. This means nothing. The CD-i is a platform so devoid of anything half-way resembling a "game" that if you released a cack-handed version of Hangman on the CD-i format, it would probably top the charts and make you a saint in the eyes of the poor basts that bought the wretched machine in the first place. Ever seen a CD-i owner? I pity them. They've got dead eyes; like a doll's eyes. They babble inanely about "full motion video". They watch poorly-encoded "digital video" collections of Phil Collins' greatest hits, and try to kid themselves into believing that they're experiencing the cutting edge of "multimedia entertainment." Gits.

Chaos Control is, according to the blurb that accompanies it, "a super-production designed entirely on Silicon Graphics". This is the politically correct way of saying that, at the end of the day, *Chaos Control* is yet another FMV-based shoot 'em up. And we all know what that means, don't we? That means it's shite, doesn't it? And indeed, a cursory play reveals that, yes, *Chaos Control* is indeed shite. Like every other FMV shoot 'em up you care to mention, it's fun for approximately fourteen and a half seconds. But wait there. It gets worse. Far worse.

Okay, a few issues back we looked at a game called *Nova-storm* - another FMV shoot 'em up. It consisted basically of a

(Above) Can you identify this everyday object, viewed from an unusual angle?



run-of-the-mill *Space Invaders*-type game, with tiny sprites, played in front of a nice video backdrop. And verily, it was denounced as a traitor to gameplay, and was oh-so-rightfully branded with a low score for all its sins.

Well, *Chaos Control* goes one step further than that game, down the brown sticky road to Shitesville. *Chaos Control* doesn't have any sprites at all. All the things you're shooting are actually part of the FMV sequence itself.

"But wait a minute," I hear you cry, "how can they be? Don't they disappear when you shoot them?"

The answer, my friends, is "no". What happens when you shoot them is this: an animated "explosion" graphic appears over them to mask them from view. And it stays there until they leave the screen. What a con. Let's say you're shooting at a little man wearing a jet-pack. He's standing on the roof of a building, way off in the distance. You hit him. He explodes. Then he jumps off the building, still exploding. Then he swoops around over the pavement - still exploding. Then he zooms right up close to you, as if he's about to shoot - but he's STILL BLOODY EXPLODING! Can it get any worse? You bet your life it can.

Filmed In glorious suck-o-vision

Everything is viewed from a cockpit perspective. It's "on rails", so you can't decide which way you want to go; it's all pre-determined. You aim and fire with the mouse. Yes, that's right, with the mouse. The poxy mouse. Point, click, point, click, point, click, ad nauseam. That's all it is. It's like "Mavis Beacon Teaches Clicking". A batch of extremely repetitive video sequences, with the irritating percussion of a thousand and one clicks of the mouse.

The blurb on the back of the box has the audacity to claim that *Chaos Control* is "a

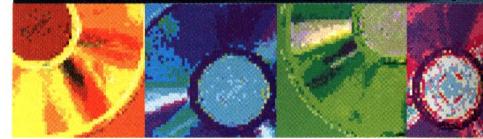
Chaos Control

CD-ROM REVIEW



(Left) Why stop with the Statue of Liberty? Let's blow up the whole bloody country.

(Below) Look pretty miserable, don't they. Perhaps they've just looked at the score.



fantastic epic that blends cyberculture, virtual travel and manga graphics". Ahh, the heady scent of empty buzzwords. Allow me to translate.

"Cyberculture": means that it's got robots in it. And a girl with big tits wearing armour. "Cyberculture" is – and this is a FACT – even sadder than Tolkein-inspired "middle earth" beardy toss.

"Virtual Travel": presumably this phrase has been invented by some self-important tosswit to describe the way that you appear to move during the game, but, in fact, have no control whatsoever over your allotted course. Excellent. That's up there with "seasonally adjusted" statistics, and being "economical with the truth", if you ask me.

"Manga Graphics": Manga is phenomenally popular right now. *Chaos Control*, however, features a few half-baked, badly-drawn cutscenes, coupled with an execrable script and some of the worst voiceovers I've ever heard (I've seen a lot of Kung Fu movies, so I know what I'm talking about). It doesn't even look vaguely Manga-esque. It's truly, truly awful.

Gratuitous slagging

I don't know, perhaps my venomous rant has got the better of me and I'm being a tad unfair. To be completely honest, if you like pretty, pre-rendered shoot 'em ups like *Rebel Assault* then you probably won't find *Chaos Control* too

appalling. The thing is, so many other games have done it better. *Creature Shock* looks absolutely breathtaking and is at least a bit more involving. Although to a certain extent your route is pre-rendered, you at least get to choose which tunnel you want to head down every now and then, whilst it's altogether more atmospheric, with superb cut scenes and a suitably spooky soundtrack. Then there's *Cyberia*, which tries to blend a bit of walky-talky adventuring and puzzle solving in with all the pre-rendered shooty bits. It doesn't quite work all of the time, but at least they tried to do something a little different (and again, the sound and music are absolutely fab). *Rebel Assault* is obviously full of super *Star Wars* bits, with a plot and characters that are so familiar it's just a pleasure to play (so long as you're a *Star Wars* fan), whilst the aforementioned *Novastorm*, although seriously lacking in the plot and atmosphere stakes, has no pretensions of being anything else but a rather basic shoot 'em up (and you can now buy it for around 50p).

As for *Chaos Control*, there really is little but the graphics to recommend it. Take away the gloss and the glitter and there's not much to it at all. In fact, it sucks. It sucks so hard I felt like I was going to be sucked in through the screen. It's about as much fun as a three-mile swim through a river of Kaliber with your mouth wide open. Here is a game that has been designed to appeal to salivating,

babbling imbeciles – human jack daws whose eyes glaze over whenever you dangle a shiny object in front of them (CD-i owners, perchance?) It's an insult to anyone who loves a good video game. An insult, goddammit. I want to pull down its pants and smack its bottom – hard!

Woah there. I've got to get a grip. Violence never solved anything. Let's go about this peacefully...

...Perhaps I should write a protest song about these FMV atrocities. Then maybe we wouldn't have to put up with them, and everything in the games-playing world would be, like, just really beautiful, and we could all walk around naked and just, like, love one another.

It'd be really far out, children. Flowers in your hair, folks. Altogether now:

"All we are sayyyiiinggg... is give games a chance."

SCORE

A pretty CDI game. A pretty awful PC CD-ROM game.

40

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3D HELL

Rendered Graphics
a love/hate story

John Ewing has had just about enough of paying out his hard-earned wad on games, whose stunning looks promise a lot but deliver sweet FA in terms of gameplay. Is he alone in his views? Do other games players also believe that we're all getting ripped off? Read on...

3D Hell

*rendered Graphics
a love/hate story*

THREE-DIMENSIONAL rendering is killing the CD-ROM – and the struggle will get worse before it gets better. The games industry is taking on a new and bigger marketplace, which utterly ignores its most loyal customers. We are the connoisseurs, the small fry. The big fish are GQ readers with gold American Express cards, who are more interested in the “style content” of a product than its quality or value for money.

The banal conventions of 3D rendering are dragging this industry back to square one. After more than 15 years of video gaming, the virtual goalposts have moved overnight. No longer must a game meet standards of gameplay, originality and addictiveness – the only important factor these days is the number of megabytes crammed with 3D animation. If you can fill one with nice, pretty piccies, that's just fine – but two would be better.

Now it's time to stop and think: if rendered graphics routines are driving the CD-ROM into creative bankruptcy, will the games industry be able to pull itself back from the precipice?

Graphics in the workplace

The emphasis on graphic content begins long before the birth of a new game. The fundamental structure of a development



Silicon Graphics

Steve Webb, spokesman for Silicon Graphics, the hardware/software manufacturers who are responsible for everything from *Jurassic Park* to *Donkey Kong Country*, wonders whether game designers should take a lesson from the artists and go back to school: “If you want to learn how to do graphics, you can go on a training course to learn how to model, shade, use light and texture. But is there a lack of training in gameplay? Should the craft of game writing be allowed to develop based entirely on market forces, or should there be a more recognised form of training?”

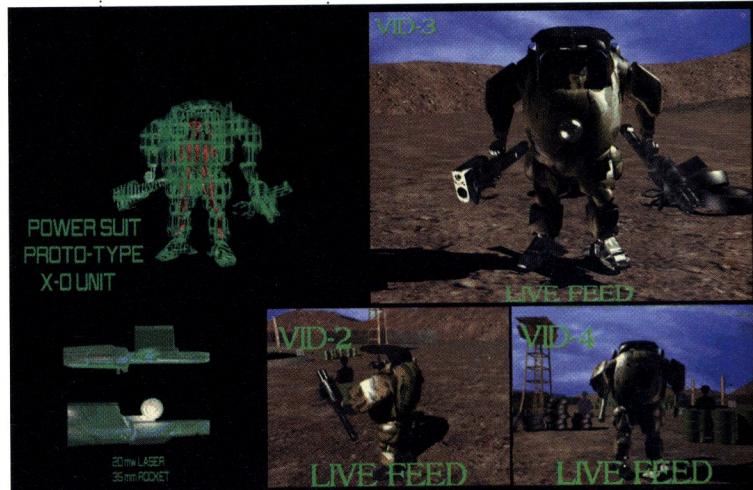
(Far left) Argonaut's *Creature Shock* does nothing but play back pre-rendered movies. In order to get some interactivity, there are different paths: for every fight there are a number of different outcomes. But, there's a limited amount of space on the disc, so the possibilities are finite.

(Left) Interplay's Todd Camasta radically boasts: “We are essentially doing movies now.” The result is *Cyberia*, a combination of vacuous rendered sequences and hopeless arcade games. Paramount Pictures must be all-a-tremble.

(Right) The ultimate 3D Hell – SCI's awful *Cyberwar* has nothing but a Steve Hillage soundtrack to recommend it.

(Below) Westwood's *Command & Conquer* is a quality arcade/strategy game which has no need for rendered graphics. These sequences are the least interesting and the most expensive element of game design – so why bother?

team in the mid-'90s has become biased towards the artists, and the majority of man hours are spent on fanciful 3D pictures. Cryo in Paris – the team behind *Dragon Lore* – consists of 68 graphic artists and 12 pre-production artists, compared to only 25 programmers. But that is by no means unusual. John Hare, whose team at Sensible Software has come up with such graphically bare hits as *Sensible Soccer*, confesses that even his small organisation has been turned on its head by the 3D revolution. “We used to employ two programmers for every graphics artist,” he says, with a sigh of disbelief. “Now we have one programmer to every four graphics artists – it's scary, really. It's hideous the amount of work you have to do with graphics just to get anything on the screen.”



The Dreaded Intro

In theory, rendered intro sequences are supposed to set the scene and suck players into the game's world, but in most people's experience they only serve to make the in-game graphics look crappy by comparison.

"The floppy version of *Magic Carpet* comes on four disks – that's the complete game, without the intro sequence," says Bullfrog's Peter Molyneux. "The only reason we bothered is because everyone else is bothering. It's a self-fulfilling need. You have to do it because your competitors are doing it and they have to do it because you're doing it."

Mirage offers an equal measure of lateral thinking in return fire. "Why," asks Julia Coombs, "would someone want to spend £50 for a game to run on their new £1,500 PC if the same game could run on a Spectrum? I don't see why people should settle for the bare essentials when they can have so much more."

world of *Creature Shock* or *Novastorm*, in which the graphics are stunning but the player becomes a spectator, watching the action with a slack jaw.

Real-time rendering

But let's look on the bright side. Most professionals are confident that the CD-ROM will survive this pointless 3D revolution unscathed. Rendered graphics as we know them will be dead and buried by the end of '95. But if we can't fill our CD's with hundreds of megabytes of animation, what can we do with them?

"The trick is to do real-time rendering of photorealistic quality," says Jez San from Argonaut in London, who has developed BRender as a professional rendering package which can create graphics of 3D Studio quality during gameplay. "Objects can't just look like flat, polygon, regular, horrible things. They have to be real. Alive."

**"Rise of the
Robots is to
Colonization what
Keanu Reeves is to
Peter Ustinov."**

Unfortunately, PC's just cannot cope with more than a few thousand moving polygons on screen, so there are still boundaries. However, Argonaut has come up with a clever hybrid in which background artwork is on film but foreground objects are not.

"Imagine a lavish undersea trench," says Jez San, with a wistful look. "The rippling water above casts shadows onto the rocks and the coral. It's a fully-animated scene, and the user moves through it, but all the creatures in the undersea world are real-time BRender objects, so you can interact with them. You have full interactivity plus lavish visuals."

Will it really be that perfect? Few things in this industry ever come up to expectations, but the future certainly looks bright.

"We are just scratching the surface of interactive adventures," says Origin's JC Combs, optimistically. "They can only improve from here."

So, in ten years time, will we look back on this era of 3D banality and cringe with embarrassment? "No, I don't think

so," says Interplay spokesman Todd Camasta. "I'm more worried that there are three TV stations dedicated to wrestling in the US. Now that is embarrassing. How do you explain that to your grandkids?"

Good looks don't last

As much as we tell ourselves that "good looks" are not as important as a great personality, there is always a deep-down animal instinct which proves us wrong. Sight is the king of the senses; the trigger for our desires. Time Warner's futuristic beat 'em up, *Rise of the Robots*, looks superb – cool, clinical lines, beautiful lighting, imaginative designs. We're talking about sheer, voyeuristically, sexual pleasure here. On the other hand, *Colonization* is a deep and meaningful game with an ugly-looking front end. *Rise of the Robots* is to *Colonization* what Keanu Reeves is to Peter Ustinov. One is shallow but beautiful, the other has a world of experience and the lined face to prove it.

Which is it to be?

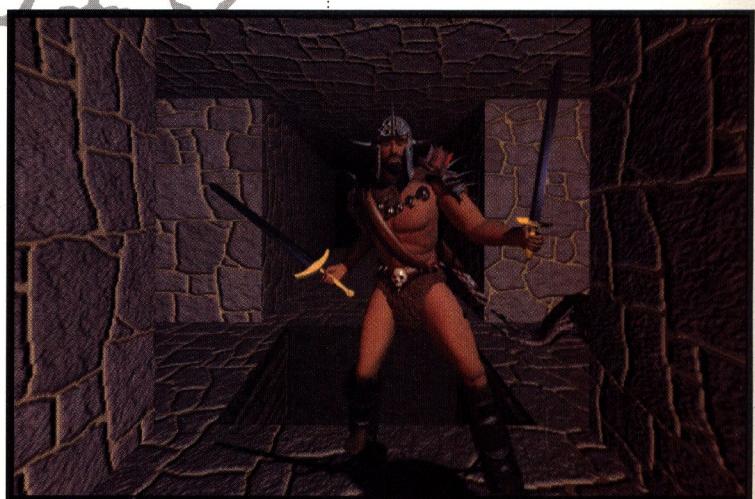
The big problem with the latest crop of PC CD-ROM games is that they attempt the impossible. They promise a miracle of photorealistic, interactive gameplay, which just won't happen on your 486. Today's PC games (using hardware technology which is now about a decade-and-a-half old) can create 3D environments of two kinds. First, there is the pseudo-3D of *Doom*, *Descent* and *Magic Carpet*; worlds so absorbing and atmospheric that the player never even contemplates the lack of photographic precision. Second, there is the "real 3D" rendered

(Left) Atreid popped its PC cherry with a conversion of *Fury of the Furries*, but for the past two years they have been developing an alternative to conventional polygon modelling.

(Right) Sensible Software, author of *Sensi Golf*, is fighting the tide. "Our speciality has always been gameplay," says John Hare. "The more emphasis that's placed on graphics, the less our company is worth in terms of reputation."

(Below left) Jean Martial Lefranc of Cryo (Dragon Lore) brazenly says: "Our interactive films, which you obviously despise, appeal to the computer illiterates."

(Below right) Lands of Lore 2 from Westwood Studios. Pretty – but does it matter? "The animations in Jurassic Park weren't only memorable because of the technical skill, but because they brought the creatures to life," says Steve Webb at Silicon Graphics. "Computer gaming is the same – flashy graphics are not an excuse for poor games."



Argonaut

FOR

The Argument For

Jez San at Argonaut (*Creature Shock*) is one of many industry pros who believe in the so-called "next generation gamer", who will sit down to watch a CD-ROM with a *Kia-Orá* and a bag of popcorn.

"When people go to see a movie they don't complain that they can't interact with it," he says. "They're there to be told a story, to be sucked into this world for an hour-and-a-half. It's the suspension of disbelief. The story unfolds in front of them - they have no control over it, but they still enjoy it. There's no reason why we can't have a huge market in story-telling-type games with some interactivity... there are a number of people who are non-gamers who own CD-ROM drives who will go for that kind of thing."

Jean-Martial Lefranc, of Gallic developers Cryo, compares current animation to the days of silent movies, when actors were forced to use heavy make-up and overblown movements: "At that time, these actors who looked silly were conveying a lot of emotion to the audience of a new medium and they were using the techniques of an old medium: classic theatre." According to Lefranc, the modern-day CD-ROM developer should be using that same approach. "The key point is: does it bring emotion to the public? The answer seems to be yes if you look at the sales figures."

Jez San, Argonaut: "When people go to see a movie they don't complain that they can't interact with it."



Interplay's Todd Camasta: "We essentially are now doing movies."

Ultimately, the direction of the publishing industry is governed by that same criterion: sales. Money determines everything, and right now the major companies are quietly confident.

"When we first started developing *Rise of the Robots*," says Julia Coombs, spokesperson for Mirage, "we commissioned an independent survey to ascertain what the consumer (that means you, remember) wanted from a combat-style game. We steered the development to meet those needs and have been rewarded by over a million units sold."

Jeffrey "JC" Combs, art director of *Wing Commander 4* at Origin Systems in the USA, agrees that the increase in graphics is nothing more than a reaction to public demand: "The graphic element is as important as the storyline," he remarks. "The public expects to see good graphics. This is a double-edged sword. If you have great graphics and a terrible story, it won't sell, and vice-versa. The consumer is becoming more sophisticated about graphics every day. Just like special effects in films, they expect to see better and more spectacular graphics with every game."

The conspiracy is revealed

Passive gameplay might be unappealing to the hardened gamer, but it is great fun for people who have never played games before. "These people don't have 80 hours to conquer the universe but they do want to be entertained," says Camasta. "They like

Jeffrey "JC" Combs, the art director of *Wing Commander 4* at Origin, claims "the public expects to see good graphics."

being chauffeured from one place to another by a series of quick clicks, and feel rewarded for solving a light puzzle. But we're going to get 'em. Our goal is to take this new breed of gamer and convert them, ever so slowly, into the hard-core gamer who doesn't want to click and wait for the "movie" to finish. They'll want to get hold of that plasma cannon and defeat the overlord who holds the secrets of the known world. It's a natural progression and it's inevitable."

Jean Martial Lefranc echoes this sentiment vociferously. "In the '20s," he says, "films were shown under tents at funfairs to the illiterate. Our interactive films, which you obviously despise, appeal to the computer illiterates. It brings them fun and emotion. Of course, the official critics find it offensive for people to like simple fun when they should be enjoying opera or Shakespeare or playing games that only computer-literate people can understand."

In other words, these sexy 3D graphics routines are not meant for you and me. We are the pure gamers, the people who love the adrenaline rush and the thrill of control. We know how to get our kicks and we don't need rendered graphics to hit that high. These games are not for us. *Rise of the Robots*, *Cyberia*, *Hell*, *Megarace*, *Cyberwar*, *Microcosm*, *Creature Shock* - forget it. It's all a conspiracy to ensnare a vast marketplace of grown-up computer owners with a snobbish disdain for games.

Jean-Martial Lefranc, at Cryo, urges the cynics to "look at the sales figures".



Julia Coombs, spokesperson for Mirage, "commissioned an independent survey" to influence the design of *Rise of the Robots*.

Psynosis AGAINST

Psynosis artist **Jeremy Oldreive** admits, "Films should be relegated to intros... and it's good riddance..."

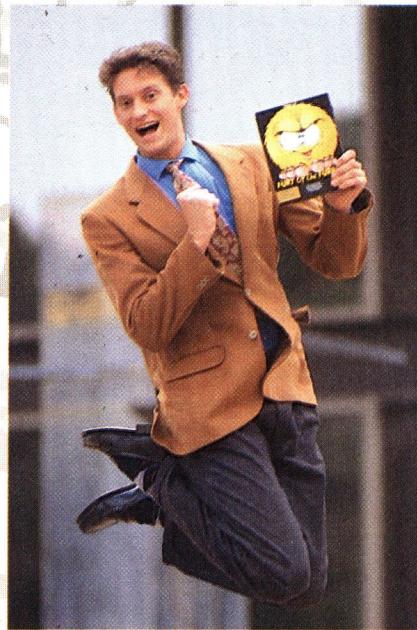
The Argument Against

It hardly seems to matter whether a game requires the presence of a 3D artist - he's already on the payroll, so why not make use of him? Hence the appearance of so many lengthy rendered sequences tacked pointlessly on to the front end of games, like the Psynosis puzzler *Lemmings 3* or Bullfrog's arcade classic *Magic Carpet*.

Bullfrog's top man, Peter Molyneux, looks back on the experience with less than mixed feelings: "*Magic Carpet* is a very good example; the whole project took about a year, but five months of that time was taken up producing that introductory sequence. It's criminal, really, because it's only going to be watched by people once and once only."

Molyneux summarily dismisses the comparisons with TV and films altogether. "When you watch television, your brain goes into an alpha state, which is like the first stage of sleep. It makes you totally relax. When you play a game you end up with the metabolic rate of a mayfly or the reactions of a jack rabbit."

John Hare agrees completely. "The stuff we're used to seeing on television is passive



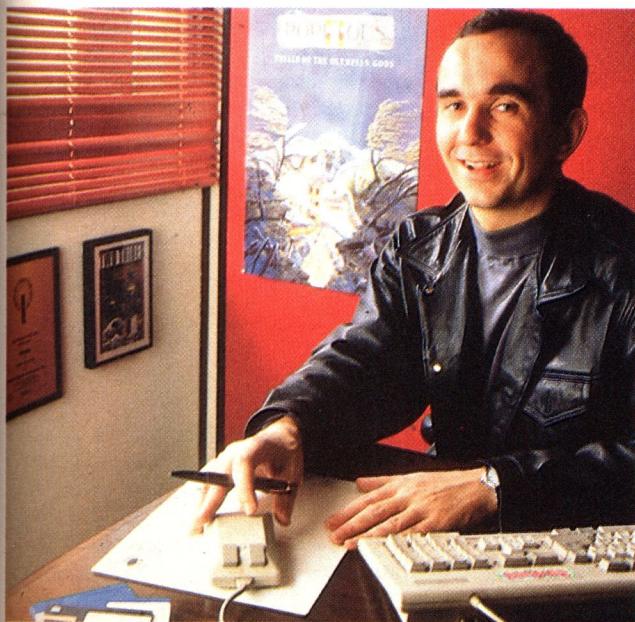
Nicholas Gaume of Atreid:
"Things like *Microcosm* look so great they don't bother with a game."

entertainment," he insists. "People who are new to the industry haven't really grasped the fact that games aren't about that. They are not passive, they are active. Computer games at the moment fill the hole left by things like Subbuteo. That's a million miles away from watching *Match of the Day*. Interactive means you are involved. It doesn't mean you're a bit-part watcher."

Jeremy Oldreive is adamant that the consumer will eventually rebel. "These people will get tired of just looking at pictures," he rants. "It's like having a fish tank - sooner or later you're going to get bored and want to go scuba diving. You get tired of simply looking...."

Money for nothing?

Nicholas Gaume, MD of French developers, Atreid (*Fury of the Furies*), believes that software prices are doomed to rise thanks to 3D animations. "Even while hardware prices are falling, software is getting more expensive," he points out. "For our next game, *Warriors*, we're spending £100,000 on the graphics sequences and we have to recoup this cost on the street price. This is not an excuse for making a crap game, but it's really hard to make money on a CD-ROM. We've made tests with *Warriors* and statistically the players enjoy the CD-ROM version (with added animation, sounds, music and



Peter Molyneux, Bullfrog: "It's criminal, really..."

Inferno director Shaun Hollywood says we should be striving for "new ways to create games, not just trying to recreate *Total Recall*."

so on) five or six times more than the floppy version. It's more fun. It's like watching *Aliens* on a cinema screen with Dolby Surround and then looking at it on a TV - it's not the same at all. You have to make a good game, but you can use the CD to make it better."

However, any CD-ROM title that tries to mimic the values of Hollywood films is doomed to be a shabby imitation. That avenue has already been exhausted. "Marketing people look on CD-ROM as a new era of computing - we just look on it as a very big storage medium," says Shaun Hollywood at DID. "That's all it is. It's not how big it is, it's what you do with it. We need to think of new ways to create games, not just trying to recreate *Total Recall* in the hope that all of the people who saw the film will go and buy the game..."

A lesson well learned

At Psynosis, the negative reaction to *Microcosm* and *Novastorm* has taught the developers a lesson in what the public really want. "Films should be relegated to intros from now on," announces artist Jeremy Oldreive. "And it's good riddance. I think we are all beginning to realise that when people see an intro sequence they just click the mouse and get on with the interactive stuff. Playing background films and adding sprites on the top is not interactive. We all know this. People here buy games, so we understand the problem." Z



Sensible Software's John Hare claims: "Software companies are desperate to sell themselves to big film companies."

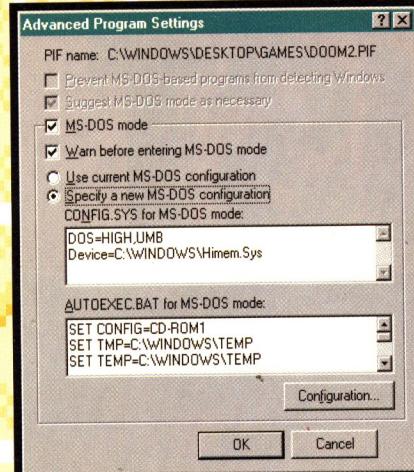
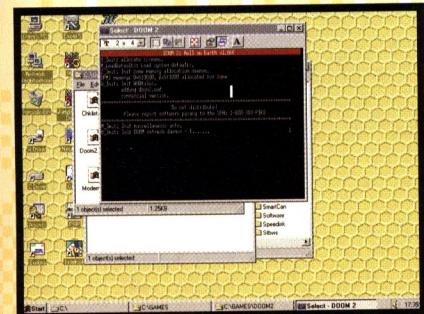
THE ONE THING that has continued to baffle and annoy most PC users is the fact that if you use a PC you have to learn the ins and outs of both DOS and Windows. Although the two are clearly linked in that they both handle files in the same way, it's a real pain that games all run under DOS, with all the messing about with boot disks and memory configurations that this entails. Whereas using something far more tedious, like a wordprocessor, is as easy as double-clicking an icon.

The reason for this, of course, is that games and wordprocessors have different priorities as far as your computer's resources are concerned. The important things for wordprocessors are ease of use and compatibility with devices like printers and graphics cards. Because most "proper" applications have loads of different commands, operating modes, and all that, it's important that they should all look and feel as similar as possible so that you don't have to learn lots of new stuff each time you use a new program. For example, most Windows programs have a "File" menu where you do things like printing and saving.

Games, on the other hand, need to be as fast as possible. No one wants them to look the same and to have similar interfaces, and they don't have anything like as many commands as even basic Windows programs (except some flight-sims). To get the most out of games, programmers like to take over the resources of the host PC, and Windows doesn't like programs that try to do this, which is why you can't run games from Windows.

True multi-tasking

This basic incompatibility is one of the things that Microsoft has attempted to tackle with Windows 95. Unlike previous versions, Windows 95 is a complete operating system; it doesn't sit on top of DOS – you boot straight into it. DOS programs can be run, but instead of running under "proper" DOS, they run in a virtual DOS session, which is created each time you start



the program. Also, Windows 95, unlike Windows 3.1, employs true multi-tasking. This means that the operating system switches between running programs, making them appear to run at the same time. What actually happens is that each program is allocated a certain amount of time before the next program cuts in, but as this happens pretty quickly, the programs appear to be running concurrently. To illustrate this, I managed to defragment my hard disk while writing this feature!

Mouse power!

The best thing about Windows 95 is the groovy user interface. The Program and File Managers have been merged so that the icons on the screen represent the actual files on your hard disk. Directories are represented by folders. Double-click on one, and a new window pops up, containing the files in that directory. Double-click on a document file and the program that created that document starts up (this should sound familiar to Mac users). Those of you who think that the right mouse button is only good for opening doors in *Doom* can think again. Use it on an icon, and a context-sensitive menu pops up, allowing you to delete or rename the item in question, copy it to a floppy, or set its properties.

This last option is where the most excellent piece-of-piss, no-more-boot-floppies stuff happens. Selecting the properties for a program file (a game) brings up a dialogue box which enables you to set up the memory required by the game. Instead of you having to spend three hours trying to work out which drivers need to be loaded high in your CONFIG.SYS, you simply tell the system how much conventional memory, EMS and XMS the game needs, and the system will then do all the hard stuff.

There are a few more options that need a bit of tweaking – you can select whether to run the program in full screen or in a window, for example (games all have to be run full screen), and whether the system should interrupt the program to let other programs running have their turn. A bit of trial-and-error is all that it usually takes, though, and if you make changes that don't work, just stop the program and start again, rather than having to re-boot.

While the above usually works, there are



(Above left) This dialogue box is where you set up the memory requirements for your games, letting Windows take the strain.

(Above right and below left) You can try to run Doom in a window, but all you'll see is the loading screen and end credits – the game itself has to run full screen.

some die-hard "DOS-only" and none of this fancy stuff" games that won't play ball. You can still play these games by running them in MS-DOS mode. This means that Windows shuts down completely while the game is running, and re-starts when you quit, and you can give them their own CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT to work with.

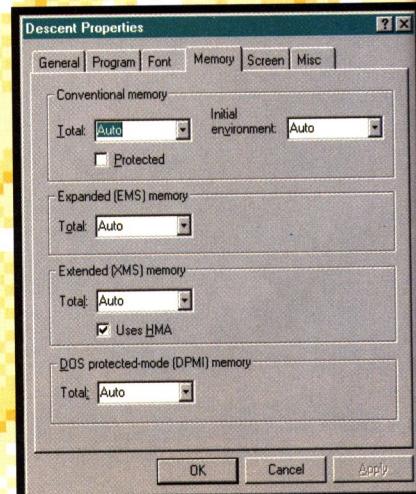
Too good to be true?

If you reckon that this all sounds too good to be true, then you're right, but only slightly. Most games seem to run nearly as well as on a plain DOS machine. On a slower system, however, the differences seem to be magnified – some games take a lot longer to load and, occasionally, there are a few problems with sound effects.

Another thing to take into account is that you really need 8MB to properly run Windows 95 (although this applies to Windows 3.1 as well). It will run with 4MB, but running games this way is very slow. If, however, you're the lucky owner of 16MB you can get both *Doom* and *Descent* running at the same time, and switch between them using the "Alt+Tab" key combination. This is guaranteed to a) impress friends, and b) confuse you a great deal. It's definitely worth trying.

If you do own a decent machine then the benefits of using Windows 95 are huge. However, if you own a lesser machine, you'll still benefit from what is a vast improvement over earlier versions. □

(Right) You can give really fussy programs their own individually-wrapped AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS set-ups to play with.

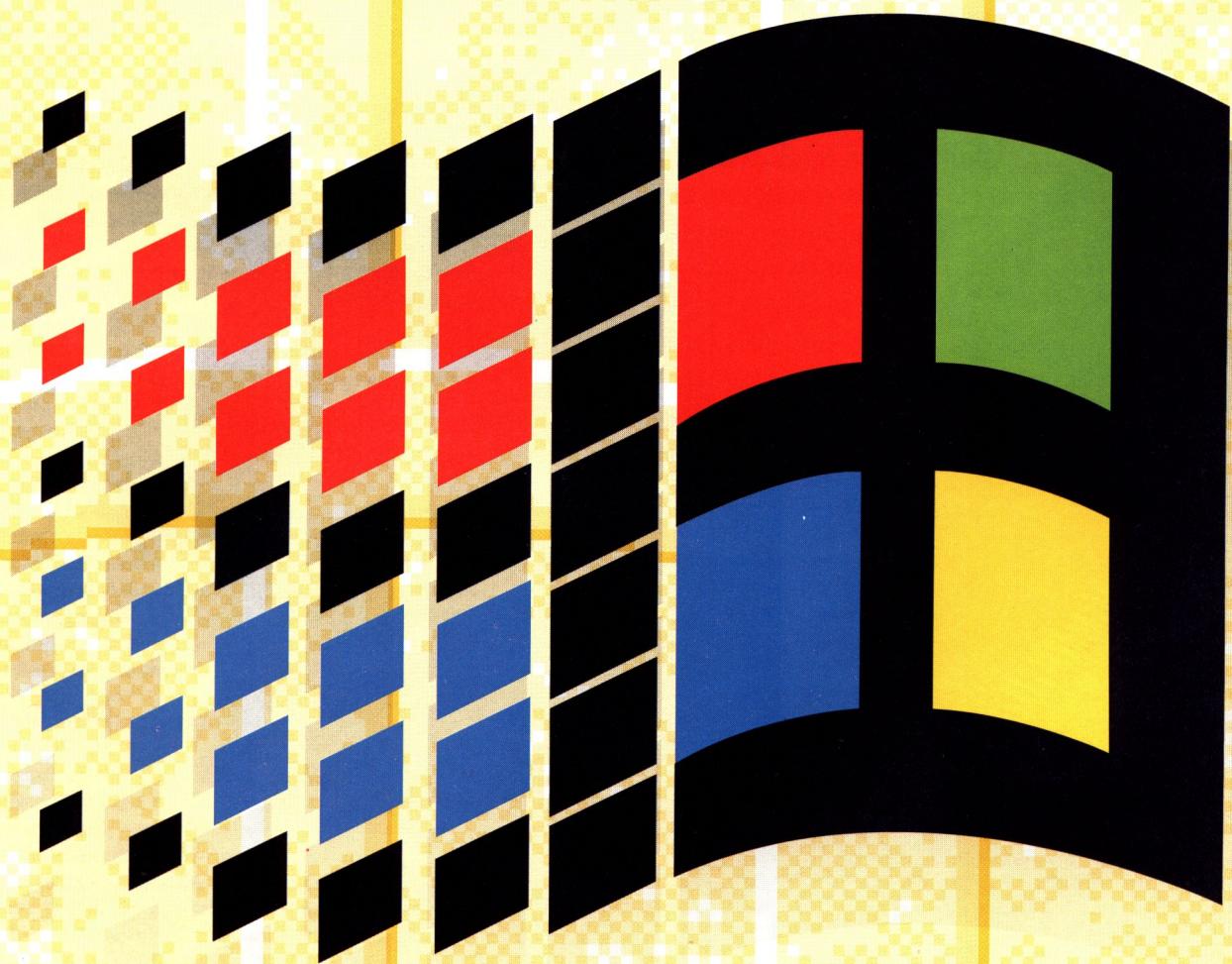




(Right) You can kiss good-bye to DOS-misery. A simple double-click is all that it takes to fire up a game from within Windows 95.

Ever wanted your fave games lined up in front of you, ready to start at the click of a mouse button? All this (and more) can be yours, but at a price...

Dave Mathieson dons his "32-bit pre-emptive multitasking operating system" hat and investigates.



An Introduction to WINDOWS 95

HARDWARE REVIEWS

With the current explosion of multimedia applications and CD-ROMs which are hitting the shelves, PC owners are being forced to realise that their machines are not just confined to doing the odd bit of typing here and there and playing games...



SCORE
70

Product: Miro
VIDEO 12PD
Manufacturer:
Miro
Distributor:
Miro
(01494 510070)
RRP: £152 inc.VAT

MIRO VIDEO 12PD



ITH THE RIGHT hardware your PC can also be used for watching films and music videos, which have been compressed to fit onto CD's using a format called MPEG. This MPEG encoding is an enormously important standard for the computer industry.

The process involves taking video footage and compressing it and the accompanying soundtrack until you can fit 74 minutes worth onto a CD. This is accomplished by noting differences between frames and getting rid of fine detail changes (the type of details that most people wouldn't notice anyway), thereby cutting down on the amount of information that has to be recorded for each frame.

Some games have already been produced that incorporate MPEG footage, such as *Return to Zork* and *Dragons Lair*, but more games have been promised in the near future. Add to this the fact that Pentium machines, running the long-awaited Windows '95, will probably have software MPEG support in-built, and you can see that MPEG could have a major part to play in the life of your PC.

There are already a large number of Videocd films and CD-i films available that can be watched on your PC, so long as you have the required hardware, and more are coming out each month.

Cool cards

The Video12PD from Miro combines a graphics card with a software MPEG playback feature. Unlike the

RealMagic card, the 12PD does not carry out the MPEG decoding in hardware; it uses software to do this, which is helped along by features built into the card. Installation of the card itself was simply a matter of ripping out your old graphics card and slotting the new one in. The next stage was to load up the graphics drivers and install the MPEG playback software.

The drivers worked well enough, and the card behaved as well as any other Windows accelerator. The MPEG software gave a few initial problems, but it was soon playing back MPEG clips with ease. The Videocd playback was a lot more difficult, however, and a lot of fiddling about with techie stuff, like BIOS settings (and phone calls to Miro), was required before anything but a green square became visible. Playback on a 486DX2/66 was pretty good, although anything slower may become a bit jerky. Still, people with anything less should be pretty used to jerkiness by now.

If you're going to upgrade anyway...

While MPEG playback is largely irrelevant to the needs of games players at the moment, there's every reason to believe that its use will increase. It remains to be seen whether cards that use software decoding, like the 12PD, will be up to the task, though, as it is more likely that developers will use the capabilities of hardware MPEG cards instead. Still, the 12PD is a neat package, and as it costs little more than a standalone graphics card, if you're thinking of upgrading anyway, it's well worth a look.



THE BEST THING about being a PC owner is that your humble old box of cack can, in theory, be upgraded just by plugging new bits in. This works fine when it comes to things like hard disks, memory and graphics cards, but upgrading a processor is usually a bit tougher than this. If you want to bump up the frame rate of your fave 3D-running-round-corridors-shooting-mutants-with-a-pump-action-shotgun game, though, you're going to have to stop whining and slap in something a bit more hefty under the bonnet.

Pentium ready chip

If you've got a slow 486, you can upgrade simply by taking the CPU out and sticking a faster one in, so long as the external clock speeds are the same (486DX/33 and DX2/66, for example). If you really want to impress the girls/boys/gerbils, though, you're talking Pentiums.

There are a lot of games out at this very moment that aren't really convincing on anything less, and it's a pretty sure-fire bet that developers aren't going to suddenly decide to start releasing games that will run on a 386.

Intel have been promising a Pentium OverDrive chip for over a year now, and most 486 manufacturers have been producing machines that are "Pentium ready" in anticipation of the chip's arrival. What "Pentium ready" means is that, they have a slot that the OverDrive fits in. Therefore,



if you don't have such a slot, you may as well forget it - you can't just remove your current chip and replace it with a Pentium.

Quality v Quantity

The model on test here is designed for 25MHz motherboards (SX/25, DX/25, SX2/50 and DX2/50), and the processor itself multiplies this by two-and-a-half times to run at 63MHz. There will also be a 33MHz motherboard model available soon, which will run at 83MHz.

You may be thinking at this point that you can get something which'll outperform a P60-based machine for 300 quid. Well you can't, so there. The problem is that, a 486 uses a 32-bit memory bus, while Pentiums are 64-bit. Therefore, to fit a Pentium to a 486

motherboard, Intel have had to stunt the OverDrive chips' "64-bit ness". This hits performance, and means that the OverDrive performs a bit better than a 486DX2/66.

Performance like this is fine for games such as *Doom* and *Heretic*, but it doesn't really cut the mustard when it comes to *Magic Carpet* and *US Navy Fighters*, and you really need a fully-fledged Pentium to try these games out properly.

Some Mothers do 'ave 'em

While the OverDrive is loads quicker than an SX/25, a better bet would be to try to get your motherboard to run at 33MHz, and stick a 486DX4/100 OverDrive chip (which costs around £200) in instead. Most motherboards should be able to do this, but you may have to fiddle with some jumper settings first. If this isn't possible, then you can buy a whole new motherboard complete with DX4/100 for about £275, which is still cheaper. If you think both of these options sound a bit scary, though, the Pentium OverDrive will definitely give you some of the welly that you'll need - but at a price.

You know those slots you can find on some 486 PCs stating to be Pentium Ready? Do you know what that slot is for? David Mathieson does...

Intel Pentium OverDrive



Product: Pentium OverDrive

Manufacturer: Intel

Distributor: Intel

(01793 696000)

RRP: £351 inc. VAT

The need for Speed!

A beginners guide to being a propeller head

Tim Ponting is an expert when it comes to blades rotating over his head. From a distance, it looks like a halo. It's not. It's a sad, geeky, propeller from hell. And if you want one too, now's your chance, as he lays down what's hot and what's not in the world of PC components...



T HAS TO BE said that PC's are actually rather pathetic computers. Imagine a wheezy old man. That's your IBM architecture, that is. Put him in a straight-jacket. That's your MS-DOS operating system, that is.

You see, the problem has been with improving PC performance while ensuring that all the old software written for it will still run, and third-party manufacturers can build function cards (like sound or video cards) that'll work in most PC's. The crux of the matter is the way in which memory is used by the processor and the design of the main system board into which all the components plug.

Back in the early '90s when we were moving from crude processors - like 286s to 386SX's and DX's - the old 16-bit ISA motherboard was perfectly adequate to cope with the data being thrown around by the processor. However, once the 486 came on the scene and software programmers began to put games together that used the extra power of the processor, the 8MHz ISA bus (the circuitry that connects the motherboard and slots) began to act as a bottleneck; slowing down graphical performance in particular. No matter how fast you made the graphics card, it couldn't display anything faster than the data could be supplied

to it. So some bright spark (the Video Electronics Standards Association, to be precise) came up with a new motherboard design (known as VESA Local Bus), which added a few extra-fast connections (33MHz) between a couple of special slots on the motherboard and the processor. Typically, you stuck a graphics card in one slot and a disk controller card in the other - the two main bottlenecks - and performance was improved massively, particularly in DOS-based games.

Of course, the downside with all this is that you need special cards to make use of the VLB slots, which cost rather more than the old ISA ones, but as the spec took off, prices came into line with the old cards.

Intel, annoyed that someone else had muscled in on its territory, brought out the more compact PCI bus to challenge VLB. To cut a long story short, Intel won, and most new PC's are sold with PCI motherboards. The advantage of VESA slots is that they can take old ISA cards as well as VLB ones; PCI slots can only take PCI cards. It's becoming less relevant now, but if you have loads of old ISA cards you want to use - two or three sound cards, for example - you may find VLB more convenient. But unless that's the case, stick with PCI.

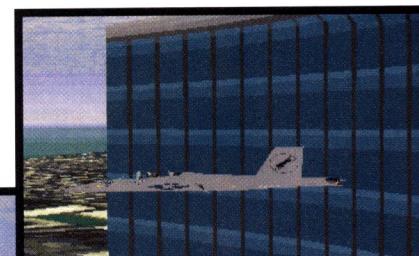
The other area where PC design has held back game performance is in the memory arena. The DOS operating system is

designed to run with the most ancient of PCs, and specified that programs had to run in the first 640Kb of memory. Anything beyond this was accessed using a kludgy system called Expanded Memory System (EMS) via a tiny "window" in the memory, between 640K and 1024K, called a Page

(Right) USNF in Lo Res 320 by 200. Yuck.

(Below) USNF in high res. Bootiful, but runs slow if you're not well equipped.

(Below far right) NASCAR is stunning in SVGA. Don't even think about it unless you've a fast Pentium.



Bottlenecks for beginners

(You too can become a geek and talk about bus widths down the pub)

Processor: Games with complex AI (such as *Harpoon II*) or complex texture-mapped graphics in SVGA resolution (such as *NASCAR Racing*) will hit a processor bottleneck. The processor has to carry out so many instructions per second that it can't deliver the calculated graphics to the screen fast enough.

Harpoon II is a particularly good example, as the graphics, although in SVGA, are just simple wire-frame vectors. It runs so slow because it's calculating the Nth sonar reflection a million miles away.

Bus Type: If you don't have PCI or VLB slots on the motherboard, you'll find that no matter what graphics card you have installed, it simply won't run SVGA games fast enough. You may also find that unaccelerated ISA hard-disk controllers are a bit slow for adventure games, which access the hard disk frequently to load graphics and animations.

A good example of a game where a fast bus makes all the difference is *Panzer General*. A 486DX is plenty fast enough for the calculations that run the game, but the difference in gameplay between an ISA 486DX/2 66 and a VLB or PCI 486DX/2 66 is astonishing. The game runs in SVGA, and the animations are so bus-hungry that the game is tedious in the extreme on an ISA machine: about a quarter the speed, in fact.

Graphics Card: This is a common bottleneck, particularly with games running in SVGA. The most important factor is obviously the bus type: PCI and VLB graphics cards are faster than ISA ones (see above). But in the same slot of the same machine, some graphics cards will be marginally faster than others. We'll be reviewing a range of PCI cards running DOS games next month.

Important wallet note: Cards that are advertised as "accelerated" may not be faster running DOS games. Generally, such cards are optimised for Windows GDI instructions, not DOS VGA or SVGA. So a fast Windows card could be a comparative dog in the games stakes.

Hard drive/controller card: This can be a bottleneck in older games that don't make use of RAM efficiently and so have to swap graphics and data, on and off the hard disk, frequently. It is also more likely to be a bottleneck even on newer machines if you're short of RAM. Fast SCSI-2 disks give the best performance,

though EIDE is the most cost-effective for home PCs.

These days, a fast hard disk loads games quicker, but rarely shows any real benefit in gameplay once loaded.

Amount of RAM fitted: If you have only got 2 or 4Mb of RAM, some games will run much slower than they would if you had 8 or 16Mb. Depending on how they are programmed, you may find that only having 4Mb RAM causes the program to have to keep loading information into memory off the hard drive in order to prevent the game from stuttering or taking longer pauses.

CD-ROM Drive: Games that spool animations and video directly off the CD to screen can hit a bottleneck as they pull data off the CD-ROM. The faster the CD-ROM spins, the quicker data can be pulled off and the less likely animations are to stutter. You must have at least a 2x speed CD to run modern games. For example, try running *Rebel Assault* on a single speed drive...

Important wallet note: 4x and 6x drives are not necessarily faster in all machines. You need a fast 486DX2 or Pentium to benefit from the higher potential data rate. If you have 486SX, you're unlikely to see much benefit.

Modem: Slow modems mean desperately slow gameplay in games that support linking over the phone. For example, *Doom* running on less than a 14.4K modem is yawn-worthy.

PC ZONE HEALTH WARNING

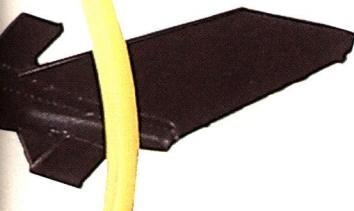
This is a feature that none of us are interested in. To read it is to grow a propeller on your head.

Danger! You might become more technically aware if you don't flick on to the next interesting part of the magazine!

The only reason why this is a problem is because British women, apparently, find technically competent men a turn off, according to research by Gallup and Microsoft, anyway. So if you do read this, you are either a woman (and men will find you desperately sexy) or you are about to become less attractive to the opposite sex.

You have been warned.

(Below) Magic Carpet with most of the daft detail options turned off runs well in SVGA on most Pentiums.



Frame. As recently as three years ago, additional memory beyond the basic 1 or 2MB was of little benefit to the gamesplayer. As processors became more capable of manipulating complex programs and sound FX, the amount of memory required by games increased. Unfortunately, the usefulness of extra memory was always limited by the necessity to pass it through the Page Frame. Nowadays, most programs are written using something called a "DOS Extender", which allows them to use all the memory fitted in the machine without having to pass it through a Page Frame. As a result, many modern games may require 4 or even 8MB to run, and generally the more memory you have, the faster your game will run, though 16MB is about as much as you can practically make use of – until Windows 95 games take off, anyway.

Just around the corner are new types of

fast memory. Your 486 or Pentium currently has two types of RAM: DRAM (the main memory) and asynchronous SRAM in the processor cache. These will soon be replaced by faster EDO RAM as main memory and "Burst mode" SRAM, both of which combined may improve game performance in any PC by up to 25 per cent!

Bottlenecks and bedknobs

So much for the background, then. Learn the above off by heart and recite it down the pub (provided you're not on the pull, unless you're a woman, in which case use it with gay abandon). What we all want to know is, what makes games go like shit off a shovel.

The PC Zone Kit Tree demonstrates how the technologies stack up. The higher up the branches, the faster the machine will be. A PCI Pentium 120 with EDO RAM, Burst SRAM, a 6x CD-ROM and fast graphics card is going to run better than anything from further down the branches.

Modern games drive the hardware to the limits. There isn't a PC in existence that will run *US Navy Fighters* in 1024 x 768 resolution with all detail options turned on at a decent frame rate (though our IPC P120 has a good try – see box out), and the same is true of many games – *Wing Commander 3*, *Magic Carpet*, *NASCAR Racing*... Sooner or later, the program hits a bottleneck, a

STATE OF THE ART

IPC'S BLINDING ValueMagic P120

We wanted to see how good you could get the most processor-hungry, graphics-intensive games to look. IPC supplied us with a 120mhz Pentium – the motherboard BIOS still in Beta stage – and fast hard drive, CD-ROM and graphics card (a Diamond Stealth 64 with 2Mb DRAM fitted).

The difference between the performance of SVGA games running on a P90 and the IPC P120 was quite marked. *Magic Carpet* would run at several frames per second with all the graphical options turned on in SVGA, and completely smoothly with the defaults. *US Navy Fighters* ran well in 640 by 480, and at a few frames per second in 800 by 600. Buy 640 by 480 is quite high enough resolution for the time being, anyway; as the movie industry knows, adding more colours gives more realism than resolutions much higher than 640 by 480. *Doom 2* ran fast (see Bench-

mark box-out). And, most remarkable of all, *NASCAR Racing* was playable in SVGA mode with reasonable graphic detail, provided you don't play full screen but look through the cockpit instead.

When choosing a Pentium, buy the fastest you can afford. Since Intel has announced it's no longer making 486s, expect prices to tumble when 486s disappear off the shelves.

The IPC machine we looked at ran everything faster than we've seen on any other machine. The build quality was fine, the monitor a great 17incher. If you have the cash, it comes recommended, though don't let them or any other PC manufacturer sell you a duff sound card: we had nothing but grief with the MediaMagic card supplied and swapped it out sharpish. But it's a minor quibble. The machine is breathtaking and we're never, ever, ever, ever sending it back. Ever.*





THE PC ZONE

point in the hardware that slows the game down more than the other components. See the panel for the full run down on what can hold up your gaming ecstasy...

Motherboards and broomsticks

In the good old days of ISA, there wasn't a lot that could be done to speed up performance in terms of how you designed a motherboard. An 8MHz bus really knobbed everything. With fast buses, like PCI or VLB, the chipsets on the motherboard make a massive difference. The right motherboard and memory configuration can give 20 per cent better performance from the same processor and graphics card combination.

For Pentium machines, Intel's own chipsets are top of the heap. Look out for the new Triton chipset, but you'll need EDO RAM and Burst mode SRAM to make the most of the extra performance potential on tap. More or less the mutt's nuts at the moment is the Intel Endeavour motherboard. With Triton and the rest of the high-performance gubbins, it's as fast as you can get.

So the most important things to shop for in a PC to make sure you get the best performance in games you can afford is to get the balance right. There's no point in having a dead fast graphics card if the processor can't perform the calculations to pass the data to the card fast enough. For example, If you want to run NASCAR Racing in SVGA, it's a chain of bottlenecks. If you've a 486, you won't ever get a result, no matter how fast a PCI graphics card you have. But if you buy a P100 or P120 but have a poor graphics card, the card may be what slows you down. But on the whole, systems sold these days are much better balanced than a few years ago. A Pentium in a PCI bus machine with a decent PCI graphics card won't have a particular bottleneck; but equally, don't expect anything less than a P100 to give an acceptable SVGA performance.

Older machines are more of a problem, especially ones with ISA-only motherboards. The chipset on the graphics card will make a big difference to any SVGA games, so it's worth hunting out cards that are fast under DOS. Also, a caching hard-drive controller card could speed up hard-drive performance. Adding RAM also makes a big difference.

At the end of the day, your best bet is to invest in the least replaceable hardware in the machine: the motherboard/processor combo. If you want a faster PCI graphics card, you can upgrade it at reasonable cost. Replacing a motherboard and processor, however, could cost you the best part of £1250. Buy into the silicon. You know it makes sense. ☐

Processor Type

Pentium

486DX/4

486DX/2

486SX

386DX

386SX

75-100 MHz
P90 GOOD VALUE.
DON'T BUY A
P60 - SOON TO
BE DISCONTINUED

VESA Local BUS (VLB)

EVEN Dx'S
ARE LOOKING
LONG IN THE
TOOTH

486DX

Now CHEAP AS
MUCK, BUT
REMEMBER IN
A FEW MONTHS
PENTIUMS WILL
BE TOO

MCA

IF YOU BOUGHT
A PC 2 YEARS
AGO THIS
IS WHAT YOU GOT
"IBM'S EISA"

NEARLY
ALL PC'S
HAVE SEVERAL OF
THESE ANCIENT
BABIES

16-bit ISA

8-bit ISA

NEARLY ALL
MOTHERBOARDS
HAVE PCI SLOTS
AS WELL AS
ISA ONES

EDO RAM

NEW AND
FAST

NOW OUT OF
FASHION, SIMILAR
PERFORMANCE
TO PCI

OLD HIGH
PERFORMANCE BUS
USED IN
NETWORK
SERVERS

OLD AND
SLOW

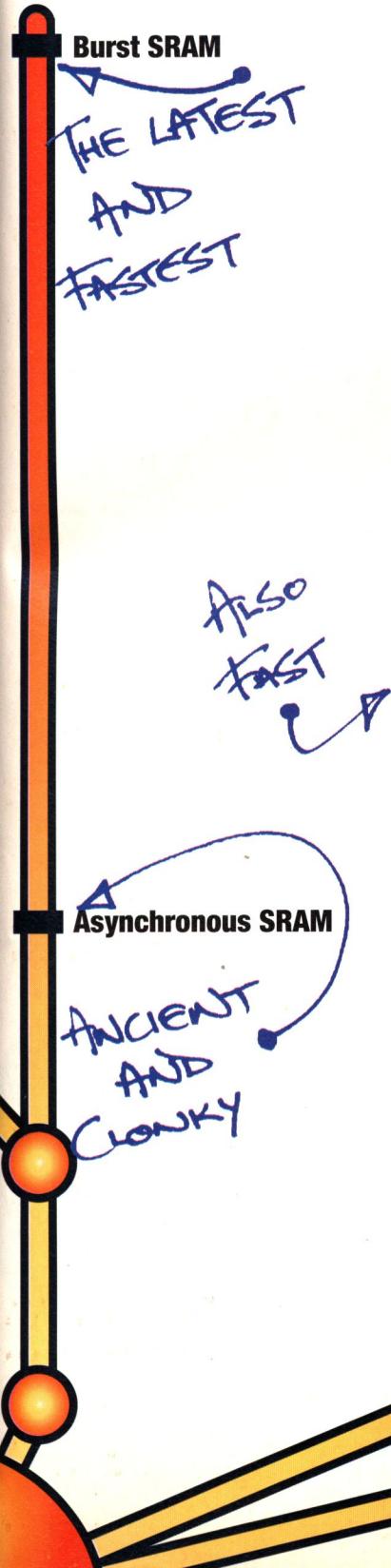
DRAM

Video Card

See next
month's
feature on
video cards

KIT TREE

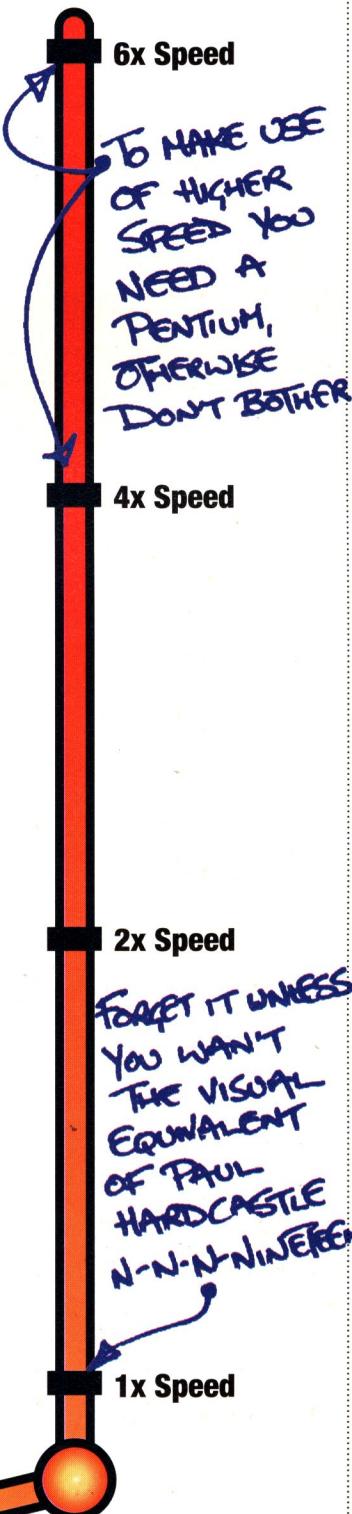
Cache RAM Type



Hard-Drive Interface



CD-ROM Type



BENCHMARKS FOR GEEKS

If you want to be a total sad geek, have some fun swapping benchmarking tales with your friends. A recent thread in the *Doom 2* conference on CIX went on for hundreds of messages about the "timedemo" test.

This is how it works. Run *Doom*, *Doom 2* or *Heretic* with the following command line:

`DOOM2 -TIMEDEMO DEMO1`

Don't touch the machine, just let it run. When it quits, it will show the message:

X no of gametics in Y realtics

Perform the following sum:

X divided by Y multiplied by 35

This gives the number of frames per second that your machine can run *Doom* in. Try changing the screen size and turn the sound off to see how, if at all, it affects the frame rate. Also, try removing all drivers (mouse, network etc.) and see what happens.

Real *Doom*-heads should run the following test: perform a clean boot, no memory manager, no nothing. Set *Doom* up so that it's running full screen but with status bar on. Run the timedemo. Anything over 20 fps is okay; over 30 fps is good; over 40 fps is exceptional.

Until we tested the IPC, the highest *Doom* benchmark we'd seen was 42 on a Gateway P90. The IPC P120 benchmarked at 53 frames per second. That's very, very fast.

Many games have their own benchmarks built into their setup routines. *Under A Killing Moon* has a CD-ROM performance test and raw video speed test in the setup routine – the demo has it too, so if you have the October '94 issue of *PC Zone*, then you can check it out for yourself. The IPC P120 weighs in at a raw video speed of 16232 K/Sec, and our Gateway P90 at 15929 K/Sec. It doesn't tell you how fast games will run, but it does give you an idea of how graphics cards stack up comparatively.

If you have *Wing Commander 3*, try keying Alt-F to show the frame rate on screen. Alt-D gives even more info. This works in the demo (*PC Zone CD*, Feb 95), so it may also work in the full game. Our P90 and the IPC P120 both ran in SVGA at 24 frames per second.



TROUBLESHOOT

**FEATURING
THE
HACKMASTERS™
AND THE
TRUEPLAYERS™**

"One potato, two potato, three potato, four..." Not on this planet. There are but two potatoes in the world of gamesplaying. Firstly, the HackMasters™ – lightly salted, American style fries, garnished with a dollop of hacking ability and a dash of Essence Of Cheat. These tasty yet unfulfilling cheaty snacks will pad out your gamesplaying stomach, but may leave you lacking that warm, "I Solved It Myself" feeling. Enter the TruePlayers – King Edwards, boiled and then roasted in oil. Traditional, solid, dependable. The original potato, the true gamesplayers. No new-fangled, hacked fries for them. TroubleShooter is full of starch.



Phone: 0171 917 7698

**Ask for TruePlayer™ Tips
from 2.00pm to 6.00pm
on Wednesdays only.**

Just ring this number and ask all the latest tips, cheats, hacks, cracks, solutions and spoils for all the latest games. This is not an answering machine. This is not a premium line number. A real person on the other end of the line will be happy to oblige you.

The HackMasters™



here's going to be a little experiment this month for we, The HackMasters™, and, of course you, the eternally-faithful disciples of Hack. We've dumped little ol' debug for a month and tried out some new-age, new fangled trainers instead. Check them out.

BACK UP

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files (mainly SAVEGAME files, peppered with the odd main .EXE file). It is, therefore, sensible to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK

If you make a bad mistake and start crying and all, then restore files by typing:

COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV

HEXADECIMAL

Your PC counts strangely – in hexadecimal (base 16). We count in decimal (base 10). For the HackMaster's experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (see table below).

WHAT YOU NEED

There are three things every HackMaster™ groupy must have (well, at least one of them).

① DEBUG

Free with DOS is a program called *debug*. A very useful program it is too, since it allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data therein. It is the program we use most in the Hackmaster Zone™, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program on this planet, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary.

Here's a step-by-step guide to a *debug* hack:

To run it, just type:

DEBUG

in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a "file not found" style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MS-DOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us (no matter how desperate) unless it's TruePlayer™ Tips day.

1 >NCHEAT.DAT <return>

Now, once you have a little '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the

program, starting with the line above the "N" command. This tells *debug* which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the "N" and the full filename.

2 >L <return>

This command loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the hands of the hacker.

3 >E 98A2 v <return>

This is the Edit function. Simply type is as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the "E" and the address (0103) and the "v". The "v" stands for a value you will enter yourself, ranging between 00 and FF (0 to 255 decimal).

4 >E 5CB6 90 90 90 90

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a long list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address (the first four-digit code) and *debug* will repeat your command (see below). Then simply type in the values which follow (FF, FF etc.) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you should press RETURN.

So basically, the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type shown in green):

>E 5CB6<Return>

21FB:5CB6 FE.90 <space> 03.90 <space>

D1.90 <space> 9D.90

<return>

>

5 >W <return>

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying "writing xxxx bytes" will appear, where "xxxx" is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing will have been changed on your hard disk until you type this command. Therefore, if you've made a mistake earlier, quit *debug* and start the process again.

6 >Q <return>

This quits you back to DOS.

② A DISK SECTOR EDITOR

Another useful bit of kit is a Disk Sector Editor, such as XTree Gold or PC Tools. If you own one, then you'll know how to use it – but it is important to note that the offset (or address) in a *debug* hack is for *debug*, which automatically adds 256 bytes (or 100 hex) to the address. So, if you prefer to use your editor, and a separate disk editor hack isn't included, then you just deduct 100 hex from the address. Therefore, if an address is 0141 on the page, then your address will be 0041. It's a simple case of deducting one from the second figure on the left. If in doubt, use *debug*.

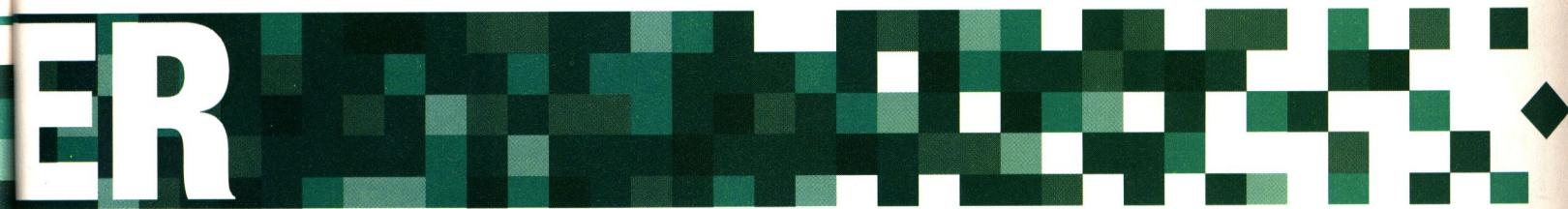
③ UNP

UNP is a highly useful shareware utility by Ben Castrichum. You'll find it on this month's coverdisk. Many games these days have compressed .EXE files, which make debugging and sector editing impossible.

Enter UNP in a second, by typing:

UNP <filename>

You can expand the .EXE file to its proper size and hack it to bits. It causes no damage to your files (and besides,



(Above) Descent will now be much easier for all you wimps thanks to our trainer.

(Below) A large robot from Rise of the Robots that will now be dog meat thanks to a PC Zone trainer.

TRAINERS

"Huh? What are trainers?" you could be wondering at this juncture. Well, "trainers" are basically custom-designed TSRs, which run behind a given game (let's say, *Descent*) and either: a) constantly plump up your energy and ammo; or b) give you a special range of hot keys to press during the game when you want your energy and ammo plumped up. The one big advantage with trainers is that they don't actually modify any bits of your game. There's no need to back up files. No need to get any hex numbers exactly right. And there's no need to use debug ever again. "Hurrah" I hear you all chorus. You just run the trainer and that's it. And thanks to those lovely lads at the Gates of the Underworld BBS, we're able to offer you a veritable feast of trainers to delight over this month. For information on how to run them, rewind to this month's disk pages, but in the interim have a little gander at this short list:



DESCENT (Interplay)

This cool little TSR will give you access to all the little cheat codes embedded in this 3D bump-in-the-walls 'em up. Sure, you could use the cheats, but they're too long to type in quickly, and anyway, they make the game too easy. True HackMasters™ like to allow themselves a small challenge.

CHAOS ENGINE (Renegade)

Just a quick dip in the not-so-recent past to unearth this little bonmot for Renegade's top-down, scrolling shoot 'em up. Sure we hacked it in HackMasters™ before, but you may have missed that. It'll give infinite ammo and coins to both players.

DESERT STRIKE CD (Gremlin)

Are you a tad annoyed by the rather vertical "difficulty curve" on this helicopter sim? Good, you really should be better at arcade games, but if you're aren't (say, for instance, you play Badminton a lot or something) then lob your CD version in the drive and run DESERTRN.ZIP for full on infinite everything.

MENZOBERRANZAN (SSI)

Oh God. Another RPG with yet another unpronounceable name. Don't these guys ever get bored of thinking up names like "Kakkandor Son of Fleeg" and "Gordania Son of Gordania"? Fret ye not. Just use the trainer and see how Kolgothlorgia, Dark Lord of Kakakkakkka deals with an "infinite health" spell.

EPIC PINBALL 3 (Epic Megagames)

Can't see the point in this one, but the TruePlayers™ tipsline has been thrumming with calls with people who want to have infinite balls (obvious joke deleted). Your wish is our command.

RISE OF THE ROBOTS (Mirage)

Hah. Thirteen formats supported, two years in the making, six months of relentless marketing and... one day to hack. Should protect your games better boys. Try out this trainer and destroy the already sub-atomic gameplay.



DARKSUN II (US Gold)

We haven't had the space to cover this game in any depth, so we're handing over the responsibility of a text file, which details the heady ins and outs of the *Dark Sun II* plot and gives you first-hand experience of the cheats. Good luck.

XCOM II: TERROR FROM THE DEEP (MicroProse)

I've saved the best until last. A cornucopia of XCOM utilities, trainers, and cheats await you on this month's cover CD. Or how does an *XCOM II* Solider Editor for Windows sound (xcom2sed.zip)? What about a simple loads of money cheat (gns-x2mc.zip)? If neither of those tickle your ultra cannon, try for full pointless gameplay, a 14 option trainer (rbstertrr.zip).

You have been warned. Trainers can seriously damage your gameplay.



THE BOTTOM LINE

If you get into trouble or are a bit scared, ring us on TruePlayer Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for free tips support.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1995. If you try and pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

PC Zone and Dennis Publishing take no responsibility for alleged hardware or software damage caused by direct or indirect use of the HackMasters™ hacks and cracks. If the chances of damage were higher than 0.0000001 per cent, then we wouldn't be printing them. Make sure you follow the instructions and nothing can happen.

The TruePlayers™

Excellent game, excellent solution.
How's that for symmetry?

SPOILED!

BioForge



L

EADING INTO the game, a spacecraft flies towards the planet. You will find yourself a patient lying flat out on an operating table. A man, who you would suspect normally enjoys playing more with himself, Dr Mastaba, is operating on YOU.

Cell Three

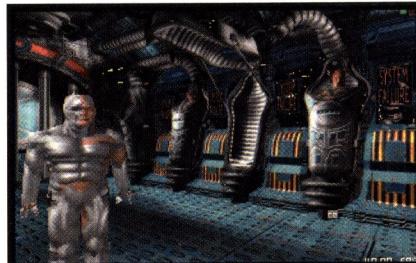
A tremor will go off and Lex stirs. The Nursebot moves. You will need to punch the Nursebot until it bounces into the force bars. This will create an explosion that forces the bars to flash on and off. To the right of the bars you will see some Meat – pick it up. Take a look beside the bunk and you'll see Lex's Log. Collect this too and read it. Watch the force bars carefully for a pattern to take shape, and run through them when they go out. If the force bars are visible when you try to break through, you will get shocked!

Cellblock Corridor

Collect Caynan's Arm which will be lying just outside of Cell One. You will need to try and force open the Cellblock doors. Notice that sparks fly out of the metal panel to the right side of the hall. As in Cell Three, observe the force bars outside of Cell One and scram through.

Cell One

Caynan will attack Lex as he enters the cell. The Meat will act as a good distraction for



Lex, thus providing you with the choice of either evading or attacking him. Once past him, to the North of the cell, you will find a Fork. Pick up the fork and look above it to see a photograph. Collect this also. At the centre of the cell is a Log. Collect the Log and read it. Run back through the force bars into the Cellblock Corridor. Now utilise the Fork to pry open the metal panel. This will unveil a puzzle to open the doors. As with the force bars, if you hit the wrong button Lex gets shocked. Successfully complete it and the Cellblock doors will open and you can enter the Guard Room.

Guard Room

Lex will enter the room and there will be a conversation between Dr Matasba, Marine Dropship and the Control Room. Listen carefully to their conversation. Look to the top of the room where you will see five monitors. Use the monitor at the far right to turn off the force bars to Cell Four. From this position you will be able to use the top monitor on the desk – the Robot Control Panel – to control the Nursebot in Cell Four. Use the Nursebot to pick up Caynan's Arm and then move the Nursebot in front of the Palm Reader. The Cell is now set for your entry. Go back into the Cellblock and into Cell Four. By the bunk in Cell Four is Dane's Log. Collect it and read it. You will discover Caynan's Access Code (Entry 12 Line 62). Take it and run back out of the cell and into the Guard Room.

The first thing to do is to reinstate Caynan's security access. Control the Nursebot to drop Caynan's Arm. Use Caynan's Arm on the Palm Reader and the door will then open. Run through the door and you will find yourself in the Chaos Corridor.





Chaos Corridor

Beware! A Hallway Guard Robot will be patrolling in the hall. Hide when the Guard Robot is moving down the hall towards Lex and you will be safe. Look to the end of the hall on the right hand side and you will see the Cyro Room.

Cyro Room

You will need to take a look at Chamber one. To do this use the Freeze Monitor on the left side of the door. Fido will break out of the freezer and attack, but you can knock him unconscious by luring him onto the Iris Valve. If you push the buttons on the back wall, the Iris Valve will open and Fido will fall into the Tank. Then turn the valve on the back wall in order for Cyro Fluid to be poured into the Tank. Once the sides visibly freeze over, climb down into the Tank.

Tank

Use the frozen Tank to cross the ledge and enter into the tube. This is the tunnel that leads to Cell Two, walk into the hole on the right side to reach it.

Cell Two

When Lex comes up through the hole a Mandite Guard will wake up and you will have to defeat him. Once you have done this collect the Blaster from the middle of the room. Now return to the Chaos Corridor and go into the Elevator and push Level One to go to the Tower.

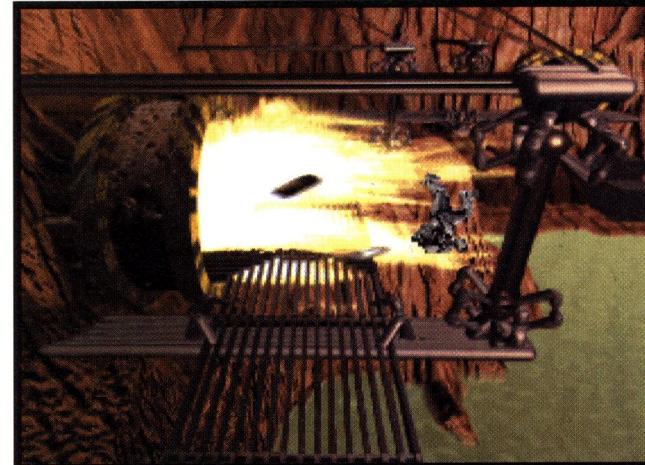
Tower

Once inside the Tower Room you will be confronted by six Hoverbots. All six have to be defeated. Knock out the first two by reflecting shots from your Blaster onto the Elevator walls. The second two Hoverbots



will foolishly shoot each other if you walk backwards and forwards. The last two are defeated by bouncing shots off the glass walls of the tower. After you've done away all six, threaten Roland by shooting the Blaster near him. This will allow access to the Tower Gun. The Tower Gun enables Lex to shoot down the two Dropships. Both must be destroyed. If you don't down the second Dropship it will destroy the Tower and Lex.

To get back to the Elevator you will have to kill or evade Roland. (Why not expend a little effort and leave Roland's mum without her favourite son!) Once in the Elevator, push Button Three for the Control Corridor.



(Above) Warning to children: G-forces can seriously damage your face.

(Below) Don't mess with a quantum flux gate.

Again, use your acquired skill of bouncing bullets off walls to kill the Security Robot - five shots to be precise. Push the button on the left side of the hallway and enter the Operating Room.

Operating Room

Sit back for a moment and watch the scene. Dr Mastaba takes control of Lex with a remote control device and tells him that Marines are on the way. Under the Doc's control Lex kills a guard and is then told his past and the future of Dane. Dane reaches up and destroys the remote control. As Lex blacks out the Doctor takes his Blaster. When Lex wakes up the Doctor has escaped and Dane asks Lex to put him out of his misery. Show Dane the Photograph and then kill him, this will enable you to pull out his battery. Look for the Flute in the opposite corner, collect it and return to the Control Corridor. Push the button to open the Control Room door. Once inside, obtain the Hardsuit from the Hardsuit Machine and take the platform elevator to the Machine Shop.

Machine Shop

Once in the Machine Shop defeat and kill the Mondite Guard. Then pick up the walkie-talkie, which the Mondite drops. This will enable you to hear the distress signal from Dr Escher. Pick up the block. If you need a battery then take one from the bike and return to the Control Room.





Once back in the room, look at the Reactor Monitor (it's the far right monitor beside the HardSuit Machine) and get the Reactor Code. To the left of the bottom of the stairs is the Robot Control Panel, use this to move the Control Robot into the Reactor Room. Knock the Reactor Robot off the Reactor Room platform. To open the Reactor Airlock door press the button on the right side of the Control Corridor. Go to the Airlock, where a Hardsuit is vital to prevent Lex suffocating, and enter the Reactor Room.

Reactor Room

Avoid Droggi! To cross to the Reactor Core activate the light bridge by pressing the top button. Lex must shut down the Reactor. He will fail if he takes too much time by turning off the light bridge before Reactor shutdown, and an explosion will occur. Pull the levers on the left and right side of the Reactor Room monitor. Use the access code from the Reactor monitor and push the button on the right side of the monitor. Retreat back across the light bridge and, when Droggi steps on it, turn it off. If Lex

(Above) Did you know that Pamela Anderson is a cyborg?

(Below) They ought to try and strap a rotoscoping camera to her and see how the game sells.

takes too long getting over the bridge then Droggi will turn it off on him. Now go along the Control Corridor to Elevator and push Level Four for the Basement Corridor.

Basement Corridor

As Lex exits the elevator, the door closes behind him, Airlock doors open and a Security Robot emerges. The Airlock doors



close. Defeat the Security Robot with five shots. When you kill the Security Robot, the explosion lights up the corridor. Press the button at the end of the hall to open the Airlock door. Wearing a Hardsuit enter and head for the Landing Platform.

Landing Platform

Walk towards the ledge. If the Reactor has not been deactivated a tremor will shake Lex off the ledge and into the acid lake. Go through the tunnel to the Tunnel Basin. Once here Lex can jump off the ledge and down onto the Beach. Use the Alien Transport Device on the second block to zip trip across the acid lake to the Crashed Dropship. Evade the Acid Beast here in order to reach the Dropship Interior.

Dropship Interior

You can obtain a Tonfa Gun and Key Device by fighting and killing Captain Tumolt. Get the medicine if you need it and use the Key Device to open the door to the Gunnery Station. Here you will find the Missile Control monitor. Use it to fire a first missile past the Acid Beast and to fire a second missile to kill him. Go back to the Crashed Dropship area where you'll find a package of missiles laying beside the Dropship. Remove the Warhead from the missile, which has slid out of the package, and the Warhead will begin countdown. Zoom across the acid lake, climb up the blocks, get back on the ledge and run to Blast Door.

Blast Door

If you leave the Warhead by the Blast Doors it will detonate, blowing them up. Make sure you are completely clear by running back to Tunnel Basin, otherwise Lex will be blown to pieces! Even if the explosion goes off behind Lex as he is running, he will find himself knocked off the ledge into the acid lake, leaving him clinging to the rail as the blast almost tears him away!

Once back to the Tunnel Basin, head to the Blast Door and go through Airlock/Hardsuit Machine to Dig Site. Once here, kill the Shrimp. Give Dr Escher the Medicine and he will give you a translator. Take this with you through the Tunnel Basin to the Alien Temple.



Alien Temple

Translate the writing with the Translator. The writing will differ, depending which wall Lex is near. Note the pattern of alien characters in rings around statuary, and then go to the corridor and defeat the Shrimp to reach the Tomb of Soldiers.

Tomb of Soldiers

Drogg digs his way into this room. Fight him until he retreats, and then head back through the corridor to the Dig Site where the Gravity Tube will transport Lex back to the Tubeway Station. In the station you must defeat the Shrimp and use the monitor in the centre of the room to open the Zero G Room (press 2,4,6,8). Once in, fire the gun to get to the Final Battle Room door.

Final Battle Room

You must destroy Drogg, but remember not to use Energy Weapons. When he is destroyed, pick up the MirrorSuit device, which he drops, and go to the Alien City Platform.

Alien City Platform

The Alien Learner is messing with some controls and the Alien City comes back to life. The Alien Learner walks towards Lex. Have a chat with the old geezer, then get the battery and head back to the Zero G Room. From here, by firing the weapon, you can propel Lex back to the Tubeway station. Press 1,6,8 into the central Alien monitor, and the Tube to the Gravity Ring will open. Enter.

Gravity Ring

Make sure Lex stands on the triangles on the floor, and head towards the centre of the room. You must avoid the flying debris. Line up the O and the Gravity Ring will clear of debris, opening up the acid lake. Go along the Tubeway Station where there is a monitor in the centre of the room. Input 0,6,8 to open a tube to the Dig Site. Inside, lying on the ground, you will find Dr Escher's Logbook. Read it. The Airlock/Hardsuit Machine has been destroyed. Return to the Tubeway Station. Open the tube to the Alien Temple by inputting 1,4,6,8 into the monitor in the centre of the room. Use the Alien Monitor beside the Alien Temple tube



to move statuary in the Alien Temple. You can observe the area from the monitor. Lower the statuary back onto the tube using the Alien Monitor beside the tube. Open it again and grab the Grenade the Marine throws at you. Throw it back to him with haste. If Lex hangs around too long - BANG! However, if he gets it back to the Marine in time then the Marine gets the whipping.

(Above) More scraping and fighting. Men eh?

(Below) Avoid the dinosaur.



Use the tube to travel to the Alien Temple. At the Tube Station go onto the ledge at the Tunnel Basin. Here, avoid the Marine who rushes out of the Corridor, but destroy the other who is waiting outside the Tunnel. Then go back to the ledge through the tunnel. Inside the Tunnel, dodge the shots from the Dropship, then go to the Landing Platform where you'll hear the Doctors farewell address. Kill the Marine on the Platform and walk up to the Airlock Doors, which will open. The Airlock leads the way to the Basement Corridor. Destroy the Marine there and push the button to open the Elevator. Head for Level Three, the Control Corridor. Once here, kill the two Marines and go back to the Operating Room.

Identified At Last!?

You still don't know who you are so use the monitor to finally find out. Head back to the Control Room and kill the Marine in there. Now trot along to the Machine Shop.

Did you pick up a battery earlier? Good. Chuck it in the bike and rev that baby up!

Vroommmmmmmmm!!!!!!



OFF THE

BOARDS

Mark Burgess looks at games with chunky sprites, weird backgrounds, sensational plots and memories of the good old days of *Scramble*. Plus a look at the one program that no self-respecting gamesplayer should be without. All in the world of shareware, parked in a lay-by off the super highway.

THIS GAME SOUNDS GOOD – fight your way through lots of levels against plenty of cunning baddies. It even looks good. The sprites are large and colourful; you could be playing a console game. Until you start to move, that is. The main figure, a sort of Captain American, moves like a Gerry Anderson puppet. But there's worse to come. When the first lot of enemies appears, you can fire at them until you make contact with one, but then you cannot move out of their way. They stick to you like a limpet about crotch height. As your gun is at shoulder height, this presents a problem. To put it bluntly, you get your balls shot off and die. I tried this again and again, but there was no way out. Once the first hovertanks get down to your level, you can neither shoot nor duck them.

If I can give just a little bit of advice to shareware game authors: once you've designed all the sprites, thought up a plot and written all the legal stuff about licensing and what have you – play the game. Give it a go. Check out the collision detection. Make sure the sodding thing works, in other words. There are some of you that just aren't bothering. And no one's going to send you \$12 for more of the same crap. It's a real shame, too, because there is a good, if undemanding, game in there somewhere. But if the author can't get the control right, I wouldn't hold my breath for future revisions.

Registration brings a full ten levels, and the best of luck.

Shareware from: Sergio Fernandez for Pabulum Software, 40 – 66 Ithaca Street #2A, Elmhurst, NY 11373

Registration: \$12

Needs: 386 or above, VGA

Supports: AdLib, SoundBlaster

AIR FIGHT

AT LAST, a Windows game that isn't too bad. This one is a horizontal shoot 'em up where you rescue hostages while trying not to be shot down by helicopters in the air and tanks on the ground. Balloons will try and bomb your hostages, so get them as well. In fact, shoot everything except the little green men running like hell for cover.

The gameplay *Air Flight* is a lot like *Scramble*; you fire at some things and bomb others. When you pick up your little green men a voice says "welcome", but I couldn't work out whether it was supposed to be welcoming them or you.

Once you have your hostages nice and safe, it's back to base and a cup of coffee while the score tots up. In the shareware version, you can't score more than 1500, but I didn't get anywhere near that.

The game seems to make use of a hefty swap file, or perhaps it shouldn't be used when you have other applications running. I found that when the screen filled up with enemy craft, the whole thing slowed down badly and the hard disk thrashed about like an MP undergoing "correction", if you know what I mean (and I'm sure you do).

The backgrounds are nice and colourful and the sprites are well drawn. The sound effects are good, too. Someone has put a lot of thought into this game and it shows.

Shareware from: K-Soft, 9879 Cedar Court, Cypress CA 90630
(71662.332@compuserve.com)

Registration: \$20

Needs: Fast machine (DX4 or above) running Windows

Supports: Any sound card driven by Windows



SKY BOMBERS



MCAFEE WINS CAN

EVERYONE SHOULD have an anti-virus package. I know that some people reckon it's like a St Christopher's medal; giving psychological security. But what's the matter with that? Even if the threat from viruses is exaggerated – quite likely – there is nothing wrong in having a bit of comfort. And who knows? It might just work.

Speaking as someone who loads about a dozen bits of shareware a month on my PC, I've always had at least two anti-virus packages on my PC. The one I always come back to, and use constantly, is McAfee's. McAfee has been in the virus hunting business since '89, and its expertise shows. It has a presence on most major sites – like CompuServe and America Online – and its forums are used by everybody to swap information about outbreaks.

The DOS version of McAfee that I have loads up in my AUTOEXEC.BAT and scans the hard disk and memory before and after every session. In three years it's only found two viruses, but that's two that didn't get through to reformat my hard drive. McAfee's is generally thought to be one of the best, if not the best. The new version for Windows, 2.20e has just arrived all over the net and at a bulletin board or shareware library near you.

This is the first release that has made me give up the old DOS version. It's breathtaking and you must all get hold of a copy. You might remember an earlier version for Windows that just ran in a DOS window, like the early versions of WinZip. But this Windows version is seamlessly incorporated into the Windows operating system. It's a pure joy.

WinScan detects known viruses by searching the system for sequences of code unique to each computer virus, and reporting their presence if found. For viruses that encrypt or cipher their code WinScan uses detection algorithms, which work by statistical analysis, heuristics, and code disassembly.

It also checks for new or unknown viruses by comparing files against previously recorded validation data. The clean option can restore infected files, master boot records (MBRs), or boot sectors.

The scheduler scans your system at any pre-set time or interval. The program checks itself before starting up. There are a host of network options.

Apart from anything else, the help file is full of common-sense information about viruses. Take this for instance: "Although boot viruses only account for about ten per cent of the total number of computer viruses, they account for over 90 per cent of reported virus infections. This is because ALL formatted diskettes, even data diskettes, contain a boot sector that the computer attempts to execute when started."

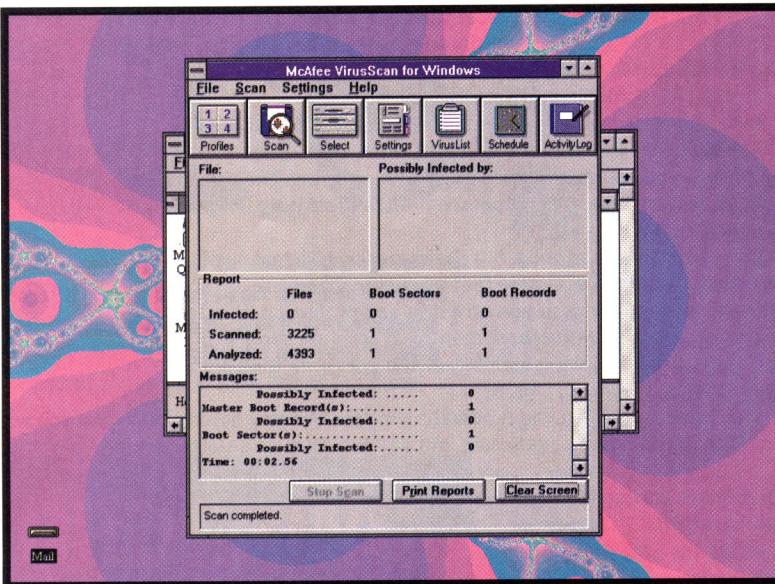
There is a very useful list of viruses with the parts of the disk that they infect, and information on the best way to get rid of them. Running CLEAN sorts nearly all of them out; it will also try and rescue corrupted files and even boot sectors.

Updates are released about once a month – and with new viruses appearing daily, it's sensible to keep your anti-virus software up-to-date. An essential program for anyone with a computer. And it's shareware. Get it now.

Shareware from: McAfee, Inc. 2710 Walsh Avenue Suite 200 Santa Clara, CA 95051. Fax 001 408 970 9727

Registration: \$25 (in UK contact IPE Corporation Ltd. (formerly International Data Security) 10 Alfred Place, London WC1E 7EB

Needs: Any machine that runs Windows



This month's programs

CompuServe

Forum	Section
ACTION GAMES	3D Action
ACTION GAMES	platform/maze
ACTION GAMES	Driving Games
ACTION GAMES	shooting gallery

cix
filepool

2newfiles
McAfee WinScan

Program	Filename	Size
Breakfree	Bomber.zip	261793
Sky Bombers	bumpca.zip	752182
Bump Racing	afight.zip	568576
Air Fight	wsc-220E.zip	577547



WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE?

PUBLIC DOMAIN

This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are that: you do not pass the work off as your own; do not incorporate it in another program without due credit; and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

SHAREWARE

This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or "if found useful". The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program, although it is true that many programs ask you to send \$5 to an address in Wichita. A leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90 per cent of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program; a place on the mailing list for updates; and, often, a properly printed manual. Not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

OTHERS

Bannerware/Adware: These are programs where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README. 1ST. Read it by typing: TYPE README.1ST | MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file in the disk. Typing in the name of it should load the program. Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760k disk. The files will have extensions, such as .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, or .ZIP. However, the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

BUMP RACING



HERE'S A SIMPLE IDEA - three cars, two players. The first player to hit the third car, ten times, wins. It's like dodgems. It's a Windows game, which is ominous, and it was designed with *Klik & Play*, which is downright frightening.

I was impressed with the opening screen; nice title I thought. Those little cars are smaller versions of what you'll drive. After a while it dawned on me that nothing was happening. The title screen was the playing area. I was supposed to flick these poxy little cars around like tiddly winks.

The sound was quite good, but the gameplay has gone badly missing on the way. It seems to me that whenever shareware has shown what it can do in terms of inventiveness and professionalism, you inevitably get a following three months of absolute garbage. It's as if the industry has a sudden brainstorm and goes back to the old days of insomniac anoraks at MIT, churning out Pong clones.

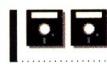
This game would just about pass the time for two very bored people. But you would really have to be at a loose end. The sound is okay, by the way, but will break up on a slow machine - anything less than a Pentium.

Shareware from: Mykol Designs, Austin Texas (MYKOLL@AOL.COM)

Registration: Freeware

Needs: Fast machine (dx4 or above) running Windows

Supports: Any sound card driven by Windows



BREAKFREE

HERE IS A Breakout clone with a twist. You are inside the game; a 3D version. You must destroy the walls that face you with fireballs. When they run out, it's "game over, man". The walls are divided into breakable, unbreakable and power draining. A radar screen shows you which is which and gives the fireballs in play.

The fireballs are bounced off an invisible paddle directly in front of you. You can move forward, backward, and from side to side, with either the cursor keys or the mouse. The radar is important in positioning yourself, ready to bat the fireball back.

Knocking the walls apart releases scores, points, bonuses and such useful things as a gun. This will help you get through a level when you've run out of fireballs. Each levels is named after an element: hydrogen, helium, lithium and so on.

I know everyone has played Breakout and its descendants to death, but this is a new way of dealing with the game. It's addictive and well put together. Anyone who likes Breakout/Tetris-type games should love it.

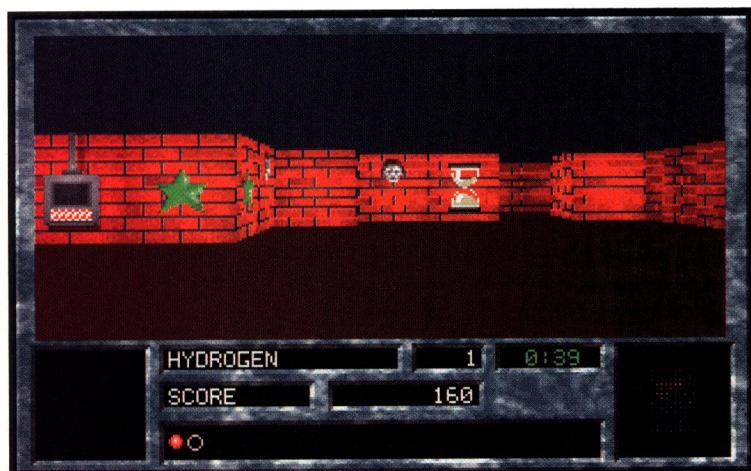
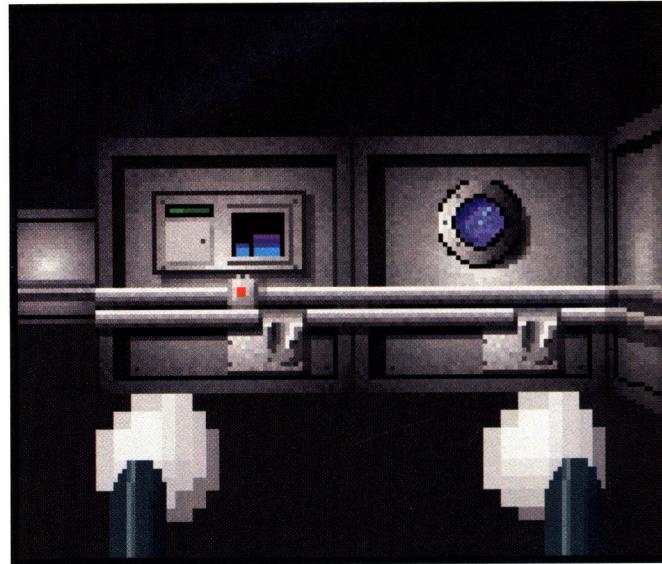
Recommended processor is a 386.

Shareware from: Software Storm, P.O. Box 2029, Orem, UT 84059

Registration: \$14.95

Needs: 386/20 520K of free conventional memory and 256-color VGA

Supports: SoundBlaster compatible sound cards



BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing PC Zone Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 1 – April 1993

Dune II

(89: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99

Civilization meets Sim City in a frantic space 'em up.

Lemmings 2: The Tribes

(88: Recommended) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99

A brilliant reworking of one of the best computer games ever written.

Ragnarok

(60) Mirage – Board Game £35.99

As the great man said: if you like this sort of thing, this sort of thing you like. Let down by too many inessential, flashy bits and not enough on the main, interesting idea. As stand-alone shareware, *The King's Table* would rate 75%.**Reach For The Skies**

(52) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £35.99

Uninspired w/w flight sim with pretensions to strategy that don't stand up to close inspection.

ShadowWorlds

(60) Krisalis – Role-Playing Game £34.99

We asked a hundred people who'd played *ShadowWorlds* if they thought it was a damn good game with a smart control system. They said "Yes". Our survey said "Erk-err". Sorry, they lose.**Tegel's Mercenaries**

(50) Electronic Arts – Strategy – Deleted

Not funny. Not entertaining. And not very good.

The Complete Chess System

(80: Recommended) Kompakt (UK) Ltd – Chess £34.99

Good enough for the expert, easy enough for the beginner.

The Legend Of Myra

(65) Grandslam – Puzzle 14.99 – £10 direct

One of the best *Boulderdash* clones to appear recently. Hardly original, but fun for a while if you've got fast reflexes.**Transarcтика (CD)**

(55) Simarils – Strategy £39.99

Reads a lot better than it plays. Very disappointing.

Ultima Underworld II: Labyrinth Of Worlds

(94: Classic) Origin – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Just go out now and buy it, okay.

Issue 2 – May 1993

Archer Maclean's Pool

(87: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £25.99

Excellent pool game. An impressive, if not wildly different, sequel to *Whirlwind Snooker*.**Battlechess 4000**

(81: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99

Brilliant, funny and with a workmanlike chess sim attached. But for how long will it stay funny?

Blade Warrior

(40) Zeppelin Games – Combat £9.99 (£12.99 CD)

Arcade combat jaunt with a smattering of detailed quest elements.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space

(90: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Testing strategy/historical simulation. Buy it.

Crystals Of Arberoa

(47) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £2.99

A badly designed RPG with only its price to recommend it.

Heroquest

(66) Gremlin Graphics – Board Game £11.99

A good, but uninspired conversion of the classic board game.

Jordan In Flight

(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99

Looks good, plays okay. There's just not enough to it, and it's a bit too easy.

Metal Mutants

(45) Simarils – Combat £2.99

Impress your friends – this disk makes an unusual coaster that will brighten up any coffee table.

Ringworld

(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

An engaging interactive point 'n' click sci-fi romp.

Shadow Of The Comet

(87: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99

A successful attempt to recreate the work of Lovecraft for game players. A must buy.

Space Quest V: Roger Wilco The Next Mutation

(72) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99

Better than the usual twee nonsense from Sierra.

Spear Of Destiny

(60) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Out classed, out of time and overpriced.

Storm Master

(70) Simarils – Strategy £12.99

An attractively presented and absorbing strategy game.

Veil Of Darkness

(70) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £35.99

Good script, easy to play but a little short.

Wacky Funsters

(30) Accolade – Compendium (not available in the UK)

The game never gets beyond being the equivalent of an enjoyable demo.

X-Wing

(88: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Combat £45.99

Fabso space-based shoot 'em up.

Xenobots

(75) Electronic Arts – Combat £39.99

A spanking good, strategic shoot 'em up, which has too short a life expectancy for our liking.

Zool

(85: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Platform Game £34.99

The best platform game released for the PC so far.

Issue 3 – June 1993

DJ Puff

(62) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99

Okay, but it looks like an 8-bit console game.

Dogfight

(50) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Far too easy, major flight model discrepancies and grass can kill you. All in all, a pile of jobs.

International Athletics

(55) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99

Fun as far as it goes, which isn't far.

International Rugby Challenge

(67) Domark – Sport £34.99

Scores a try, but doesn't quite manage the conversion.

Serpent Isle: Ultima VII Part Two

(89: Recommended) Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere creating pays off once again.

Spaceward Ho!

(25) New World Computing – Space Combat £44.99

There are better strategy games for free.

Strike Commander

(65) Origin – Flight Sim £44.99

There are lots of brilliant bits, but unfortunately there's also an equal number of "unbrilliant" bits.

The Greatest

(70) Beau Jolly – Compilation £39.99

A good way to save £81.98 and try out some good, if slightly old, games.

The Legacy

(60) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £44.99

A brave attempt to create a gothic role-playing game which doesn't quite gel.

The Terminator 2029

(50) Bethesda Softworks – Combat £29.99

Terminal Case.

Tony La Russa II

(73) SSI – Sport – Deleted

An exceptionally-detailed baseball game, and almost a very good one.

Unlimited Adventures

(59) SSI – Role-Playing Game £37.99

Competent, but not the most essential purchase ever.

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3

(69) Bethesda Softworks – Sport £44.99

May appeal to buffs, but has nothing to attract the casual browser.

World Cricket

(30) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99

Fails to provide either action or strategy.

Tom Landry Strategic Football

(75) Merit Software – Sport £44.99

A very good, strategic, American football sim that could do with more player involvement.

V For Victory 3 – Market Garden

(82: Recommended) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99

Why bother with boards, hexes and counters when you've got games like this?

Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego?(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Edutainment £39.99
Educational, fun and highly recommended.

Issue 5 – August 1993

10 Intelligent Strategy Games(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.**688 Attack Sub**

(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99

Sub-standard? Definitely not!

Air Bucks v1.2

(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99

A potentially interesting variation on a theme, which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

Betrayal At Krondor

(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99

The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

Championship Manager '93

(75) Domark – Sport £29.99

An undoubtedly "serious" management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1

(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99

Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

Dizzy Collection

(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99

Contains: *Fast Food Dizzy*, *Fantasy World Dizzy*, *Kwik Snack*, *Dizzy Prince Of Yolkfolk*, *Magicland Dizzy*. A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg jokes. Just about playable.**Ishar 2: Messengers Of Doom**

(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99,

Would have been a real contend if it had been released a year or two earlier.

James Pond 2: Codename Robocod

(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £30.99 – Only available in a compilation

"Nifty scrolling, great gameplay" is our first remark on playing Robocod, closely followed by "Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?"

Premier Manager

(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99

Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame

(89: Recommended) Bröderbund – Platform Game £39.99

We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

Protostar

(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/Trading £39.99

A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

Syndicate

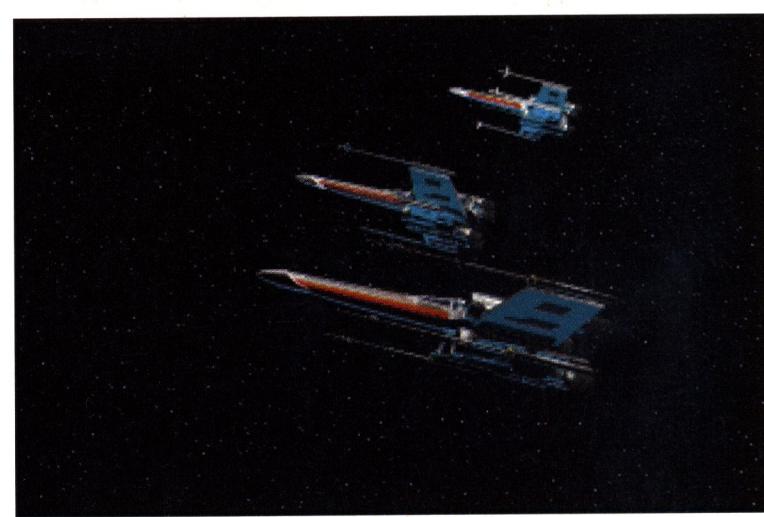
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

The Cycles

(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99

Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.



X-Wing: groove on down to the old "destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess" tune.

War In The Gulf

(81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99

Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

Worlds Of Legend

(73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99

Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

WWF Wrestlemania

(58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99

Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

Issue 6 – September 1993**Blade Of Destiny: Realms Of Arkania**

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to "serious" role-players than your average gamer.

Blue Force

(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Caesar's Palace For Windows

(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino

Compendium £35.99

A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

Fields Of Glory

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99

A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

Flashback

(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99

It's *Prince Of Persia* in the future (but this time he's got a gun).**Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge**

(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99

Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two player mode.

Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle

(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99

Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for my roast beef and dumplings taste buds.

MIG-29: Fulcrum

(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99

Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

Monopoly

(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99

A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

Napoleonic

(79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium –

Deleted £34.99

Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.

Open Golf

(50) Ocean – Sport – Deleted

A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

Pinball Dreams

(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation

£37.99

As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricy side.

Prehistoric 2

(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99

A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

Rags To Riches

(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99

Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

Return Of The Phantom

(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99

Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too short and easy to justify the price.

Sensible Soccer

(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99

The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

Space Legends

(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99

You'll like at least two out of three.

The Immortal

(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99

At least four Sunday afternoons' play we reckon.

Tornado

(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99

The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993**Ambush At Sorinor**

(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99

Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)

(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99

Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar Deluxe

(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99

More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Clash Of Steel

(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99

Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)

(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99

A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dune (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Eric The Unready (CD)

(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99

Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II

(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99

It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom

(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99

A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warrior Rats

(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99

Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gunboat

(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99

A better idea than game.

Hardball

(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99

Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Pursuit

(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99

Long, involving "story-driven" tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99

Excellent use of a CD, despite the "soft" story.

Lands Of Lore

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99

A tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye Of The Beholder III* could have been.**Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)**

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99

Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LHX Attack Chopper

(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99

Still one of the classic flight sims.

Loom

(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99

Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

Mean 18"

(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99

Reasonable mid-table golf game.

MIG-29

(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99

An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.**NHL Hockey**

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99

A great version of a brilliant game.

Pirates Gold!

(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

Railroad Tycoon Deluxe

(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99

Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)

(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!

Rules Of Engagement 2

(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99

A game of great depth and complexity.

Seal Team

(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99

In storyboard form I imagine it looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Simon The Sorcerer

(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99

At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99

An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (category it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patriarch

(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99

Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

**Simon The Sorcerer:** at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.**Wing Commander Academy**

(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99

This is only really worth it for *Wing Commander* combat addicts.**Issue 8 – November 1993****Battle Chess**

(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99

Stalemate for the BattleChess series.

Blue Force (CD)

(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99

A criminal waste of a CD.

Conquered Kingdoms

(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99

The rather second rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker

(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99

An appallingly bad poker game; a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0

(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Sim £35.00

The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying "game".

Gear Works

(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99

Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit

(50) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99

Playable but crap for the price.

Hard Drivin' 2

(30) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99

Unplayable and crap for the price.

Homeworld: Gateway II

(75) Acclaim – Adventure £39.99

Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

Lord Of The Rings

(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99

New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

Lost In Time

(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99

Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

Motor Stars

(75) Revell – Racing £59.99

Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for everyone.

Patriot

(45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95

A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

Shadowlands

(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99

One for the RPG addicts.

Solitaire's Journey

(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99

The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

Stronghold

(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99

Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

Super Space Invaders

(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99

Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

T2

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99

Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

Buyers' Guide**The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)**

(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99

An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game.

Troddlers

(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99

Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 9 – December 1993**Blue Angels**

(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99

Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football

(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99

Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat

(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99

Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix

(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99

Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito

(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99

A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99

The next best thing to an *Ultima*.**Dino Din's Goal**

(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,

Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.**Dracula**

(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99

A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II

(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99

Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro

(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99

The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Gobilians

(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle – £39.99

An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook

(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99

At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.



IndyCar Racing: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

Privateer

(75) Origin - Flight Sim £49.99

Wing Commander fans will love this. X-Wing fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm

(79) Maxis - Strategy £34.99

Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as Sim City.

Steel Thunder

(60) Hit Squad - Arcade £12.99

Reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II

(81) Recommended US Gold - Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC hindered unless you invest in a game pad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations

(80) Recommended Origin - Flight Sim £19.99

Essential if you're determined to get the most out of Strike Commander.

V for Victory 4: Gold-Juno-Sword

(78) Three-Sixty Pacific £34.99

It's still the best computer wargames system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War

(63) Impressions - Wargame £34.99

An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new - including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 - January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe

(75) Supervision - Pinball Game £34.99

Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac

(30) The Software Business - General Interest £74.99

Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe

(78) Dynamix - Flight Sim £44.99

It's better than Aces Of The Pacific, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics

(60) US Gold - Flight Sim £45.99

Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Breed

(75) Team 17 - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed

(85) Recommended Mindscape - Adventure £39.99

Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands

(72) Daze Marketing - Compendium £29.99

The ideas and graphics are interesting, the game play, however, isn't.

Goblins 2

(67) Coktel Vision - Puzzle Game £44.99

Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing

(93) Classic Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Driving £44.99

The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught

(84) Recommended Psygnosis - Adventure £44.99

Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park

(73) Ocean - Adventure £34.99

Despite some irritating flaws, an atmospheric and addictive game.

Issue 11 - February 1994

Advantage Tennis

(55) Infogrames - Sport £35.99

Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2

(97) Classic Infogrames - Adventure - £39.99

Absolutely brilliant! What the pc was made for.

Alone in the Dark (CD)

(92) Classic Infogrames - Adventure £44.99

Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing

(72) US Gold - Space Sim £19.99

Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)

(75) Software Toolworks - Edutainment £39.99

Comprehensive introduction to American politics

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo

(90) Classic Mindscape - Chess £34.99

Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)

(72) Media Vision - Adventure £49.99

Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack

(62) SSI - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. Very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire And Ice

(75) Renegade - Platform Game £29.99

A fun, but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit

(80) Recommended Domark - Simulation £49.99

Recommended, but only if you find Stunt Island limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Domination

(65) Impressions - Strategy £39.99

Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3

(75) Coktel Vision - Puzzle Game £39.99

Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker

(88) Recommended US Gold - Board Game £37.99

Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy

(60) Empire - Platform Game £25.99

Not very "magic" at all.

Master of Orion

(72) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault

(93) LucasArts - Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

It's Star Wars. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker

(55) Elite - Sport £29.99

Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

Subwar 2050

(88) Recommended MicroProse - Simulation £44.99

Easily the best "fun" simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time

(89) Recommended Electronic Arts - Adventure £39.99

Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy.

A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage

(75) Bethesda Softworks - Arcade £39.99

Okay, but once you've seen Doom, you'll laugh in Rampage's face and spill its pint.

VGA Planets

(70) PAW PBM - Role-Playing Game £24.99

A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 - March 1994

Campaign

(52) Empire - Strategy £39.99

Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action - too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager '94

(80) Recommended Domark - Sport £29.99

It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia

(80) Recommended Domark - Sport £29.99

It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2

(50) Empire - Flight Sim Compendium £34.99

Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth

(73) Accolade - Adventure £39.99

Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race

(64) Cyberdreams - Racing £44.99

Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furies

(85) Recommended Mindscape - Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99

A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Gabriel Knight

(92) Classic Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99

Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesia

(83) Recommended Mindscape - Strategy £34.99

A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilisation*.

Hand Of Fate

(82) Recommended Virgin Interactive Entertainment Adventure £39.99

You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Heirs To The Throne

(43) Mirage - Strategy £44.99

If I got this kind of quality from a pd game I'd be blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500

(65) Hit Squad - Driving £14.99

A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6

(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £35.99

The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Lilit Divi

(90) Classic Gremlin Graphics - Puzzle Game £39.99

An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season

(78) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99

A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge

(78) T'ai Chi - Sport £24.99

Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2

(65) Gremlin Graphics - Sport £34.99

It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.

Shadow Of Darkness

(80) Recommended Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99

A compelling storyline makes up for the dull battle scenes.

The Incredible Toons

(82) Recommended Dynamix - Puzzle Game £39.99

Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 - April 1994

Archon Ultra

(78) US Gold - Strategy £39.99

More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky

(83) Recommended Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Flight Sim £39.99

Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy

(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £44.99

Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day

(38) US Gold - Wargame £35.99

D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemonsgate

(45) Gametek - Role-Playing Game £29.99

Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom

(96) Classic ID Software - Arcade £34.99

The best arcade game and the best multi-player game ever. Doom is the best.

Hired Guns

(77) Psygnosis - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Ishar 2 with robots.

Hol Sound And Vision

(85) Recommended Interplay - General Interest £44.99

An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85) Recommended Interplay - Compendium £49.99

A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters - Arcade £29.99

A good two-player game (if you have a decent pc).

Mortal Kombat

(80) Recommended Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Not as good as the SNES Street Fighter II, but the best on the pc.

Nomad

(78) Gametek - Space Strategy £29.99

Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies

(80) Recommended 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball

Game £37.95

The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original Pinball Dreams.

Reunion

(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA

Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000

(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99

Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99

A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)

(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS

(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99

Both classics in their day, the two UMS games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man

(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99

Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics

(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99

Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard

(73) Psynopsis – Role-Playing Game £44.99

A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994**Air Transport Pilot (CD)**

(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95

Not my idea of fun but a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines

(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99

Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls

(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99

Disappointing really.

Award Winner Gold Edition

(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99

Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2

(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99

Without a shadow of a doubt, the strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy – £39.99

A stunning improvement of an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99

Reasonable good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark – Sport £29.99

A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99

Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.

Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99

Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.**Fantastic Dizzy**

(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99

Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic)

Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99

Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis

(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99

You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99

Can basically be summed up in one word.

Dreadful.

Megarace

(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99

A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99

Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.

Micromos

(70) Psynopsis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down

by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99

As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99

Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99

A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord

(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patrician (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99

A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99

Best described as "alright". It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994**Bloodnet**

(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carrivers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99

For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99

If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the Darkseed affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99

Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99

More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere

(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99

A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99

So close, but more bugs than Watergate.

F1

(40) Domark – Sport £29.99

The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99

Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim £TBA

As that well known saying goes: "If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love Hornet".

Myst

(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99

Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99

Miles better than Strike Commander but requires a state-of-the-art, ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99

Without doubt a love/hate relationship for Ultima purists.

Ravenloft

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99

SSI has finally got "real" and produced a playable and accessible RPG.



Sam & Max: The Clue's Inside the cat. Rip it's head off! (Sick, or what?)

Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99

The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00

A stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team

(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99

This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster

(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99

Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock

(70) Reactor/UbiSoft – Adventure £44.99

Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99

Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown

(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99

Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery

(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99

One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Directory For Buyers**21st Century Entertainment**

0235 851533

Accolade

081 877 0880

Adventuresoft

021 625 3377

Bullfrog

0483 579399

Codemasters

0926 814132

Core Design

0332 297797

Daze Marketing

071 328 2762

Digital Integration

0276 684044

Domark

081 780 2222

Dynamix

0734 303322

Electronic Arts

0753 549442

Empire

081 343 7337

Gameteck

0753 553445

Grandslam

081 680 7041

Gremlin Graphics

0742 753423

Hit Squad

061 832 6633

ICE

0453 756993

Impressions

071 371 2133

Infogrames

071 738 8199

Interplay

0235 821666

Kixx

021 606 1800

Kompart (UK) Ltd

0727 868005

Krisalis

0709 372290

LucasArts

081 960 2255

Maxis

071 490 2333

Merit Software

091 385 7755

Microdroids

071 328 2762

MicroProse

0454 326532

Mindscape

0444 246333

Novalogic

071 607 9707

Ocean

061 832 6633

Origin

0753 549442

Oxford Softworks

0993 823463

Psynopsis

051 709 5755

Renegade

071 481 9214

Sierra On-Line

0734 303322

Simarils

071 328 2762

Spectrum Holobyte

0454 326532

SSI

0444 246333

Team 17

0924 201846

Titus

071 700 2119

Time Warner

0604 602800

Ubisoft

081 941 4004

US Gold

021 606 1800

Virgin

081 960 9900

Zeppelin Games

091 385 7755

BUYERS' GUIDE

Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge

(80: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99

Good compilation, great value.

The Horde

(87: Recommended) US Gold - Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'N' Roll Years - The '50s

(70) Supervision - General Interest £24.99

Handy for '50s music lovers or as a reference - but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Setters

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte - Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £12.99

Excellent strategy game and it looks cool too.

UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

Incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audiogenic - Sport £29.99

This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack

(60) Optima - Strategy £29.99

Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport - Sport £29.95

Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 - August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War

(89: Recommended) MicroProse - Flight Sim £44.99

Two great games - Carrier Battles and Task Force 1942 - in one package. It's a winner!

Al Qudam: The Genie's Curse

(40) US Gold/SSI - Role-Playing Game £35.99

The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime

(43) Max Design - Strategy £39.99

Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Platform Game £29.99

Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V

(64) Bethesda Softworks - Shoot 'Em Up £45.99

Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency

(42) Alternative Software - Platform Game £16.99

Cheap - but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer

(67) Empire - Sport £29.99

Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm

(50) New Era Software - Sport £29.99

Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open

(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media - Sport £44.99

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)

(78) Accolade - Sport £16.99

A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on.

Newswise 3 Globocop (CD)

Theme Park: Sim City eat your heart out.



(0) Mindscape - General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overload

(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Simulation £39.99

An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2

(70) 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball Game £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

(88: Recommended) Activision - Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes - The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel

(48) Electronic Arts - Adventure £49.99

Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)

(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd - Adventure £44.99

A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99

What a game. What a bargain.

Tactical Manager

(75) Black Legend - Sport £34.99

An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £44.99

A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.

Walls Of Rome

(74) Digital Integration - Strategy £16.99

Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94

(78) US Gold - Sport £32.99

Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2

(82: Recommended) Millennium - Platform £34.99

As they say, if you liked Zool, you'll love this.

Issue 18 - September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)

(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with an excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day

(40) Impressions - War Game £39.99

A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer

(70) Electronic Arts - Sport £39.99

Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II

(70) Electronic Arts - Simulation £44.99

Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooow.

Inherit The Earth - Quest For The Orb

(72) US Gold - Adventure £39.99

A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a "sensible" game.

International Sensible Soccer

(78) Renegade - Sport £19.99

One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Lifeline (CD)

(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics - Adventure £34.99

Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes

(35) Megatech - Beat 'Em Up £39.99

Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball

(68) Ascon - Sport £34.99

Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost

(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Strategy £49.99

A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)

(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £39.99

A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid

(30) Krisalis - Platform Game £29.99

If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death

(35) Psygnosis - Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter

(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Space Sim £49.99

Sheer, undiluted quality. Treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 - October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!

(90: Classic) SSI - Wargame £39.99

Never mind the 50-ton tanks - this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs

(65) Dynamix - Strategy £17BA

A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions

(85: Recommended) SSI - Strategy £35.99

Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdal 2

(45) Core - Adventure £39.99

Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab

(50) Time Warner - Adventure £49.99

It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack

(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Driving £17.99

These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity

(50) Simaris - Strategy £39.99

Sum up Ishar III in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB

(65) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99

Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3

(55) Anco - Sport £29.99

Nice features, but gameplay not up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions

(60) Krisalis - Sport £29.99

Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football

(66) Infogrames - Sport £39.99

The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases.

This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV - Open Season

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £44.99

Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge

(73) Hit Squad - Sport £12.99

Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon

US Gold - Adventure £59.99

Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada

(76) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £44.99

Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 - November 1994

Alien Legacy

(80: Recommended) Sierra - Strategy £39.99

Space strategy thing which is a bit like Outpost without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine

(80: Recommended) Renegade - Arcade £32.99

A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization

(90: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

Try to imagine Civilization with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined Colonization.

Cyclemania (CD)

(83: Recommended) Accolade - Arcade £39.99

Extremely competent Road Rash 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike

(78) Gremlin - Arcade £34.99

Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive - Arcade £49.99

The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

KA-50 Hokum

(88: Recommended) Ocean - Space/Sim £44.99

Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)

(91: Classic) EA - Sports/Arcade £34.99

A new version of the top-down scrollly, ice hockey game from EA. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sports £44.99

Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD

(70) 21st Century - Arcade £39.99

Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock

(95: Classic) EA/Origin - RPG £44.99

Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail System Shock, that shall be king hereafter (until System Shock II comes out, that is).

Issue 21 - December 1994

Alone In The Dark II CD

(93: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99

A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol

(80: Recommended) Empire - Flight simulation £44.99

A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book apparently.

Dreamweb

(74) Empire - RPG £44.99

Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shaggy scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstasia

(93: Classic) Psygnosis - Adventure £44.99

An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-like with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD

(76) Electronic Arts - Sports £39.99

A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure

(93: Classic) Electronic Arts - Adventure £44.99

A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.

Magic Carpet

(96: Classic) Electronic Arts - Shoot 'em up £44.99

Aces of the Deep

(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra - £39.99

The graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World of Lemmings

(78) Digital Integration - £39.99

If you like all the other Lemmings games, you'll like this one too.

Armored Fist

(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novologic £44.99

Commander on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what I mean.

Creature Shock

(78) Virgin - £49.99

An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

CyberWar

(55) SCI - £49.99

It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II

(80: Recommended) Mindscape - £44.99

Love it for its brains not for its looks.

Discworld

(96: Classic) Psygnosis - £49.99

Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball

(85: Recommended) Sierra - £44.99

It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play

(88: Recommended) Europress - £39.99

Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm

(40) Psygnosis - £44.99

Repeat ad nauseam: "Pretty graphics doth not a game make."

Power Drive

(50) US Gold - £39.99

30 whole points off for no two-player mode. Sod off Power Drive.

Quarantine

(80: Recommended) Gametek - £39.99

An excellent blast and it looks good too.

Retribution

(45) Gremlin Interactive - £39.99

Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - £44.99

If it had a multi-player facility, I'd give it 100. But it hasn't, so I won't.

Warcraft

(75) Interplay - £39.99

Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 - February 1995**Alone in the Dark 3**

(95 - Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99

The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone in the Dark* trilogy.**Cannon Fodder 2**

(74) Virgin Interactive - Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Just more of the same or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more "fun with a gun".**Commander Blood**

(81 - Recommended) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99

It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia

(80 - Recommended) Interplay - Adventure/Shoot 'em up £49.99

A contender for the "Best-looking game of 1994" award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.**Dragon Lore**

(81 - Mindscape) Interplay - Adventure £44.99

Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer of the Gods

(77) US Gold - Strategy £TBA

Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3

(87 - Recommended) Virgin - Adventure £44.99

Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!**Lion King**

(71) Virgin - Platform game £29.99

The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. Good tip - just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing

(84 - Recommended) Virgin - Racing Sim £44.99

Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.**Nocropolis**

(79) Electronic Arts - Adventure £44.99

Electronic Arts goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows

(78) Team 17 - Beat 'em up £29.99

An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though - it's actually quite good.

Voyeur

(40) Interplay - Adventure £39.99

Not as perty as people think. Yes, there are suspenders and braziers in it... but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much).

Wing Commander 3

(62) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £59.99

Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress... a potentially interesting situation if ever there was one.

Issue 25 - March 1995**Aladdin**

(70) Virgin - Arcade £29.99

He Leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin - who else.

Dark Forces

(95 - Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Action adventure £54.99

The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head to Head

(55) Merit - Action adventure £39.99

We put Merit's Dr. Radiaki up against Virtuoso from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).**Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller**

(25) Gametek - Adventure £39.99

It is it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge

(70) Anco - Sport £29.99

The last Kick Off was an absolute nightmare. Have Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII

(93 - Classic) Sierra - Adventure £44.99

The latest point and click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutsey-wutesyness.

Knights of Xentar

(10) Megatech - Adventure £49.99

A plentiful lack of Beat em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberzan

(68) Mindscape - RPG £TBA

Not a tatty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary RPG from SSI.

Metaltech: Earthsiege

(87 - Recommended) Sierra - Simulation £39.99

Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Joust on thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

Realms of Arkania: Star Trail

(85 - Recommended) US Gold - RPG £44.99

The sequel to the keenly received Blade of Destiny finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts

(82 - Recommended) Virgin - Action £TBA

The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TFE Fighter: Defender of the Empire

(73) LucasArts - Space/Action £19.99

Two new missions and a new ship. What will they think of next?

Wings of Glory

(78) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £TBA

Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 26 - April 1995**BC Racers**

(62) Core Design - Racing sim £34.99

Chuck Rock meets Super Mario Kart. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure

(70) Core Design - Adventure £39.99

The follow up to Nippon Safes... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, this looks like it could actually be quite good.

Bioforge

(95 Classic) Electronic Arts - Action adventure £44.99

The first "real" interactive movie? Or is it just another game that looks like *Alone in the Dark?* Descent?**(94 Classic) Interplay - 3D shoot 'em up £44.99**

Could this be the game to finally knock Doom off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Inter-



Alone in the Dark 3: More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

play arrives at last.

Heretic

(78) id/Raven - 3D shoot 'em up £39.99

"Doom in tights". Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault

(57) Virgin - 3D shoot 'em up £34.99

A distinctly average "big robot" game joins the ranks of other distinctly average "big robot" games on the PC.

Legions

(65) Mindscape - Strategy war game £34.99

This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under Windows. Eek!

Lost Eden

(76) Virgin - Adventure £34.99

Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.**Issue 27 - June 1995****Atari Action Pack**

(50) Activision - VCS Atari Compilation £24.99

This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for Windows and all on one CD. It's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones

(78) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99

Yet another *Doom* clone - but not a bad one by any means - from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.**Football Glory**

(60) Kompart - Sports £TBA

Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*? A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.**Guilt**

(58) Psygnosis - Adventure £39.99

Sensory-ola. Guilt is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.**Jungle Strike**

(79) Gremlin - Shoot 'em up £39.99

Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original.**NBA Live**

(90) Classic) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99

EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game - the best of its type around.

Renegade

(75) SSII - Space Sim £44.99

SSI's Tie Fighter/Wing Commander wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise of the Triad

(82) Classic) US Gold and PD Selections - Adventure £39.95

Some love it and some hate it... but of the Doom-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog

(40) Team 17 - Platform £19.99

A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander

(60) Domark - Simulation £39.99

A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schmibble of Azimuth

(75) Sierra - Adventure £39.99

A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM

(94 Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

The first X-COM was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is... even better still.

Issue 28 - July 1995**Blind Date**

(25) Domark - Adventure £39.99

Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's "interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator". What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle

(92 - Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Adventure £49.99

Hooryay for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy, biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight of the Amazon Queen

(50) Warner Interactive - Adventure £39.99

This game from Warner Interactive is desperately trying to be a LucasArts adventure but failing miserably. It's naff.

Hardball 4

(83 Recommended) Accolade/Warner - Arcade/Sports £39.99

Returning May's theme of "sequels", Warner Interactive brings us the fourth Hardball. Surely Warner have to call it quite now?

High Seas Trader

(62) Impressions - Strategy/Simulation £39.99

Affectionately referred to as "High Street Trader" in the PC Zone office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds

(80 Recommended) Bullfrog - Arcade/Strategy £19.99

A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.**PyroTechnica**

(69) Psygnosis - 3D Shoot 'em up £29.99

Very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.**Psycho Pinball**

(78) Codemasters - Arcade £44.99

Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice table. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000

(88 Recommended) Gremlin Int. - Arcade/Shoot 'em up £39.99

Three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/speeding from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG - "A Final Unity"

(94 Classic) MicroProse - Adventure £49.99

Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the Star Trek name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo

(90 Classic) Gametek - Beat 'em up £39.99

It would seem that last month's theme was "games with very long names". Gametek's *SSII Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.**Ticonderoga**

(78) Mindscape - Naval/strategy £44.99

Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.

Virtus Chess

(85 Classic) Titus - Strategy £44.99

Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors

(65 Classic) Mindscape - Beat 'em up £39.99

What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

20 GOOD REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE TO PC ZONE

THE PC ZONE CHART

TOP 10 HD GAMES

Game	RRP	Comment
1. Discworld	£44.99	One of the best point-and-click adventures around
2. SuperKarts	£49.99	3D go-kart racing from Virgin
3. Virtual Pool	£44.99	Without a doubt, the most incredible pool game ever
4. Super Streetfighter 2 Turbo	£39.99	The best beat 'em up on the PC so far
5. SimCity 2000	£39.99	If you like your games a bit more serious, then this is it
6. Frontier: First Encounters	£39.99	The third part in the <i>Elite</i> saga arrives at last
7. Dungeon Master II	£44.99	The world's most played RPG spawns a sequel
8. Award Winners Platinum	£34.99	<i>Frontier, Civilization and Lemmings</i> for the price of one
9. Hokum KA-50	£34.99	The best helicopter combat game EVER
10. Descent	£39.99	The game that might just knock <i>Doom</i> off the top spot

TOP 10 CD GAMES

Game	RRP	Comment
1. Full Throttle	£44.99	LucasArts pulls out all the stops with its latest adventure
2. Alone in the Dark 3	£49.99	The third, final and best game in the adventure series
3. Frontier 1st Encounters	£49.99	<i>Elite</i> reaches its third installment
4. StoneKeep	£44.99	Interplay's long-awaited RPG. A seriously good game
5. King Quest VII	£44.99	The Sierra saga continues... in SVGA
6. NASCAR Racing	£39.99	The follow-up to <i>IndyCar</i> , and just as good
7. Descent	£39.99	The best 3D combat game released so far this year
8. Rebel Assault	£44.99	Star Wars continues to please with this popular blaster
9. Award Winners Platinum	£34.99	<i>Frontier, Civilization and Lemmings</i> for the price of one
10. SimCity 2000	£49.99	One of the best resource management games with extras

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**Mark Burgess,
PC Zone's peak
practitioner, sorts
out readers'
woes: shadowing
RAM; buying a
hard drive; probs
with disk com-
pression and a look at Windows 95**

POWER CHANGER

I HAVE JUST upgraded my 386DX-40 PC. Retaining the case I installed a 486DX2-66 Vesa green motherboard, a second 425MB hard-disk drive and a further 4MB of RAM. And it came to pass that I did this with no problem.

My questions are concerning the BIOS setup (AMD © 1993 with power management). If I use the default standard setup, I appear to lose base memory. As you appear to need a degree to understand the technical reference manual, I was wondering if you could recommend a setup that gets the most "speed" out of a CPU?

Secondly, if I have the power saving functions on (using POWER.EXE with MS-DOS 6.2), will this eat up more of my PC's memory?

K A J Feilder, Bodmin, Cornwall

There's two considerations here, and they work against each other. Turning shadowing off the system and video BIOS on from BIOS setup will speed up performance at the expense of some extended memory - about 300K. The problem with base memory will be caused by TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident) programs. Type "msd" to run Microsoft diagnostics to see how many you have and how much space they are taking up. POWER.EXE will certainly be amongst them and if you don't need it, remove it. Then take the normal precautions of loading MS-DOS into the Upper Memory Blocks (DOS=HIGH,UMB) and use LOADHIGH in the AUTOEXEC.BAT and DEVICEHIGH in the CONFIG.SYS to get your drivers high into expanded memory. MB

A WHOLE STACK OF PROBLEMS

I HAVE A 486SX-25 with a SoundBlaster Pro. I have a 106MB hard disk stacked up to 288MB (Stacker v. 4.0), and have only one problem: not enough conventional memory. I know you must get hundreds of these letters but I really am in a pickle. I have tried using Qemm v. 7.1, but it conflicts with Stackter. I've loaded Stackter into the Upper Memory Block and it only takes up 23K of conventional memory now. I've tried removing all unnecessary memory resident programs and even without any sound drivers I can only free 577K of conventional memory and this is not enough to play some games I own - Cannon Fodder, Sensible Soccer etc.

It seems to be MS-DOS (v. 5.1) that takes up all the room, and I wondered if there was any way I could configure it to take up less space? If not, are there any other suggestions on how to free memory.

M Doran, Leeds

There's two things you can do straightforwardly. The first is to upgrade your version of MS-DOS to 6.2. The upgrade was actually on a magazine cover disk a while back, so it should be easy and cheap to find. You'll gain all sorts of advantages, especially in the field of memory management.

Stacker is obviously guilty of soaking up some memory. You should have kept part of your drive uncompressed. Put all your games there. Several do not work with any kind of disk compression anyway.

I would seriously think about buying a new disk. They are very cheap at the moment and easy to fit. I would not use Stacker on it (in fact, I wouldn't use Stacker at all). But keep it uncompressed and transfer your games to it. With MEMMAKER in MS-DOS you might decide to ditch Stacker altogether. MB

CREATIVE STUFF

I AM JUST ABOUT to launch a rather large array of miscellaneous questions that need absolute 100 per cent answering, and I mean now! For starters, I will do my lick up routine by saying how absolutely excellent your mag is and I have every single issue except CD issue 18. This, I'm afraid brings me to my one and only complaint (you may edit this out if you feel the need) [Okay - Ed.]

Now, question time. Over the next year or so, I will be doing an absolutely huge upgrade operation on my utterly crap 386 to a top-end 486 or even a Pentium if I can get the dosh out of my Dad's measly pay packet. It's easy enough, seeing that I managed to get him to buy me an AWE32 and a Panasonic 562B (all £350 of it!). So basically I need your opinion on the hardware I'll be hoping to buy:

- Western Digital 340MB hard drive
- Orchard Kelvin 64 VLB
- Cobalt Blue Lightning motherboard (486DX4 75MHz, VLB, ZIF socket)

I'll also be getting a new monitor and case for my Ambra Sprinter. What ones would you recommend?

Where the smeg do I get a SoundBlaster MIDI cable for connecting the MPU-401 port to a MIDI keyboard. I've looked everywhere possible, so maybe you could direct me to a dealer in the general Romford direction (and please don't say Tandy's. Everyone else this side of Phobos has!).

I can't get Roland MIDI emulation on all games that support it. I have to use AWEUTIL most of the time but it locks up on most games. X-Wing and Raptor 1.1 are fine, but nothing else seems to work. Creative's manuals say that it's something to do with the DOS extender, so how the hell do I get emulation on all games? All my Creative Registration forms are American addressed, so what's the UK location?

I don't suppose you would be able to tell me why

my CD drive is only doing 234KB per second on a good day. I just can't get it moving quick enough. Could it be my 25MHz processor is unable to handle a quick enough transfer rate?

Oh well, I suppose this letter has to finish somewhere so it might as well be here. Keep up the great work on your blinding mag. I don't know what I'd do without it!

Andrew Duffy, Hornchurch Essex

PS keep those MODs and MIDs roiling on the CD. They're bloody excellent!

Western Digital is a good make, but then so is Conner, Maxtor, Seagate, IBM and Micropolis. They're all much of a muchness. Go for the best deal and think of a 540MB model - hard disks are at rock bottom just now.

Same thing applies here. Orchard are a good firm, but there are others. Matrox cards have a reputation for value. Contact them on 01793 614002.

If you're going for a new motherboard, there's no need to confine yourself to IBM. Intel is concentrating all its energy on Pentium processors right now, so there should be some 486 bargains around. Make sure a new motherboard has a flash BIOS and some PCI slots.

Videk (0181 204 6690) and Lightwave (0151 630 5003) are good for cables. So is Maplin (01702 554161).

Creative Labs are on 01743 248590. I reviewed the AW32 way back in issue 18 and found that non-compatibility was generally the fault of the games.

A double-speed CD-ROM drive has a transfer rate of 300kb per second (in ideal conditions). I don't know how you measured the transfer rate, but the speed you quote doesn't sound like anything's wrong. Why not speed up access by using a cache program? The processor is unlikely to affect speed, but a puny 16-bit bus might. MB

X CERTIFICATE

I'M AFRAID I'm new to the PC world, having only been an owner for six to seven months, and I am rapidly getting lost in the world of extended memories, drivers and whatever.

I've got a Packard Bell 486-33, and did manage to find my way moderately well. I set up a menu system so I can select what I want to do - play or work.

Here's my problem. I've got X-Wing on my "EMSGAMES" menu and it works fine. But if I want speech and half of the sound effects I have to load Windows (through Navigator, Packard Bell's front end), do a soft reset, then select the relevant menu choice. And then it works!

I've tried stepping through Navigator up to the WIN3 command, and using my "CDGAMES" selection, but I can't create the same effect. I know Windows has its own drivers - is this what I'm missing? And how do I turn on the drivers without Windows?

P Rushton, Leeds

I presume all your other games work fine. The files look okay to me. If you've only had a computer for seven months, you're doing fine. I'm sure the problem lies with X-Wing. Early versions suffered from a dodgy SoundBlaster driver. Write to US Gold, Units 2 & 3 Holford Way,

What is it with... Windows 95

A funny thing happened at the end of April. The license for using the "Windows compatible" logo on software, expired. This was part of Microsoft's subtle way of making sure that all packages were Windows 95 compatible by the time of its launch.

Ah yes, the launch of *Windows 95* (*Win95*). The computer industry has been waiting for its arrival since last year. Microsoft has done everything to make *Windows 95* the operating system for the 21st century. It sent out a beta version to 400,000 people, so everyone who was anyone had a copy. Computer analysts, journalists and PR people would whisper in the pub: "Have you got your copy yet?" Being without one was definitely like being at the back of the queue when the hamptons were given out. No prizes.

The one thing Microsoft didn't do was actually release the damned thing. *Win95* is still not ready. Software houses that had banked on *Win95* applications bringing in cash for the first half of 1995, watched anxiously as their budgets went AWOL and the cash flow dried up. So what is it with *Win95*? Is it as important as Bill Gates says? Should we care...?

...*Windows 95* is a full, 32-bit operating system. So what? you say, so is *Unix* and *Windows NT*. The difference is that *Win95* will run on Intel PCs and true compatibles. It won't run on multiple processor machines, for instance. It is not designed to be portable.

It's really the main bit of *Windows for Workgroups* souped up to 32-bit. What about your old 16-bit applications? Don't worry, it will be "backwards" compatible. There's a little trick it uses when launching - when you boot up, there is a version of DOS which goes through AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files. Then it launches *Win95*, which then looks at all the devices in the CONFIG.SYS. It replaces all the drivers it can with its own 32-bit versions. Whether other drivers will work is hotly debated. The rule of thumb for the beta version is, if it works under *Windows 3.1* with 32-bit disk and file access turned on, it will work with *Win95*. But not all of them do - see this month's letter ("The light's on..."). In these cases you will need updated drivers.

- QuickShot Smart Game Card + two QuickShot StarFighter 5 Joysticks
- Canon Bubble Jet Printer BJ-10ex and Creative Labs SoundBlaster Pro Sound Card
- Panasonic CR-562-B double-speed CD-ROM with 64K Cache RAM

I have recently bought my CD-ROM drive and I managed to install it, including the drivers, without any problem.

The first problem I have is when I ran *Word for Windows v2.0* and tried to open a file - the CD-ROM light came on. I assumed it was trying to search the CD-ROM for *Word for Windows* document files, which it should not do.

The second problem I have is that I get an error when I run *Windows Undelete* program and try to undelete any file. *Windows* displays the error message "Exit Windows and run the MS-DOS version of this utility - Interrupt 26 (Direct sector write to

Windows 95 has a new desktop which is much easier to work with. For one thing you don't have to worry about drives - there's something called the Universal Naming Convention or UNC. File names can be now be long and meaningful. Instead of a boring, old "mtalrev", you can have "Mannesmann Tally review". Link files act as pointers to main applications and everything can be launched from the desktop rather than having to do it from the Program or File Manager.

The other thing to mention is that things really move fast under *Win95*. You can often tell which of our machines are running *Win95* by the speed of the screen saver. The reason for this is quite simple. We've had 32-bit chips for a while now, but their performance has been crippled by an operating system designed for 8- to 16-bit chips. It's the difference between running a Porsche on three and five star.

However, much more importantly than all the above stuff is what will it mean to games players? All this malarkey goes for zip if you can't play *Doom* on it. Well you can. Good-bye to base memory problems. *Windows* will run games in a DOS window. You can even run them as "Single DOS Applications", in which case *Win95* unloads itself from memory (more or less) and lets the game gets on with things.

The thing that will make a huge difference to games players is *Plug and Play*. This automatically senses add-on devices and configures them accordingly. New drives, sound cards, modems and what have you. Just plug them in and the machine knows they're there. An end to IRQ clashes and DMA conflicts!

But there must be a catch? Yes, a big one. Although the PC doesn't have to have a *Plug and Play* BIOS - though by God, it helps - the add ons need to be *Plug and Play* compatible. And hardware manufacturers are not producing *Plug and Play* until the specification settles down. And even then they'll wait until (a) *Windows 95* ships, and (b) sells in volume enough to make it worth while.

So the big question is, will it sell? Microsoft has staked its reputation on it, they can't let it fail. And Microsoft has immense commercial pull. If your products aren't MS compatible, they don't sell. When you bought your PC it had MS-DOS on it, and probably *Windows* as well. Bill Gates has you, and the market, by the short and curlies. *Windows 95* will become the operating system for PCs because Gates wills it. If it turns out to be a dog, like *Windows 3.0*, it's our hard luck, not his.

preserve volume integrity". I have 32-bit disk access and 32-bit file access on.

Please could you help me by telling me what the fault might be and any solutions to resolve the problem. I enclose copies of my configuration files (AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS).

Tunde Alabi, London SW9

I wondered whether to include this letter - this is, after all, a games mag, but this is a common problem so I will.

Although you include a lot of detail in your letter, the answer is in your second to last paragraph. The problem happens when you are using 32-bit disk access and have an IDE CD-ROM drive on the same cable as your hard disk. Use the interface card that came with the CD-ROM drive or find an existing spare IDE interface rather than sharing a cable with your hard drive. The same 32-bit access "feature" is behind the undelete problem. Close down all Windows applications and try again, or quit to DOS and do it from there. MB

Holford Birmingham, B6 7AX, and they will send you a disk that fixes things. MB

Smooth talker

I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS I would like you to answer:

1 How come you sell your excellent magazine for three quid with one disk? Your only feeble rivals - *PC Gamer*, *PC Review* and *PC Games* charge four quid with only one disk sometimes. I especially like the style of your reviews.

2 I have a Comet Data 386DX-40 with four meg of RAM, a SVGA monitor, a SoundBlaster v. 2.0 and a free 5.25-inch drive bay. I'm looking to buy a CD-ROM drive, so could you explain about the types of interfaces and also name any drives that you can recommend. What kind of slots will the interface card take up, or do you get some that do not need interfaces? Also, I have a printer that is connected to a parallel port and a serial mouse. Will that be a problem to the CD-ROM drive?

Once again, well done for the best PC magazine around (and the cheapest).

Gareth Clarke, Dunblane, Scotland

1 We can keep the price down because we actually charge the contributors for the honour of writing for such an excellent magazine. So, any would-be contributors out there, just send us a cheque for a "monkey" and see your stuff in print (maybe).

2 CD-ROM drive interfaces are either SCSI, IDE or proprietary. I think it's unlikely you have a SCSI interface. If you did (and if anyone out there has one) you can often plug the drive straight in without another interface card.

The IDE interface is the one your current disk drives use. An IDE CD-ROM drive will often come with a small board which plugs into an expansion slot and uses the secondary IDE address. If you already have an IDE cable with a primary or secondary slot free (I bet you have) then the drive can just plug in there without using the adaptor. To add to the choices, some CD-ROM drives now have a secondary adaptor built in.

Proprietary means such well-known interfaces as *Panasonic*, *Sony* or *Mitsubishi*. Many sound cards have these built in. In any case, the CD-ROM drive will come with a card that you can plug in an expansion slot. Brands to go for are *Orchid*, *Wearnes*, *Hitachi*, *Panasonic* and *Toshiba*.

Neither the printer nor the mouse should interfere with the working of the CD-ROM drive. MB

THE LIGHT'S ON...

I bought my PC four months ago with the following specification:

- Intel DX2-50MHz with 256K cache RAM and 8MB QUICK-RAM
 - Seagate IDE 260MB Fast HDD with 64K Cache RAM and Conner 40MB HDD
 - 15" MPRII SVGA Colour Monitor (non-interlaced)
 - 1MB Vesa Local Bus super VGA Cirrus Logic 5428 Graphics Card with Windows accelerator
 - 3.5" Floppy Disk Drive, Mini-Tower Case
 - Vesa Local Bus Multi I/O Controller with two Serial Ports, one Parallel Port and one Games Port
 - 102-Keys enhanced keyboard and Microsoft Compatible Mouse
- Add-ons:

None

WORD

processor

SEND YOUR POST TO: WORDPROCESSOR, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ



Violence, pornography, that girl on issue 26, Doom, bugged games, that girl on issue 26, and all the usual weirdness.

PEEING WITH YOUR WILLY

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. You spend your whole time playing children's games on your computer and then you call someone a propeller head. You cast aspersions on people's ability to relate to the opposite sex and claim your magazine isn't sexist and then illustrate an article on joysticks with a picture of a busty blonde, clad only in a bikini. This is the attitude of people who have only just found out that they can do other things than just pee with their willies.

As for those people who think there should be more sex and violence in computer games, have they ever tried buying those magazines on the top shelf at the newsagent? Let's face it, sex on the computer is only ever going to be a wanker's interest. If you really need violence then read a book (trying using your imagination for a change) or pick a fight.

Try to remember that most children can hack into their parents' computers and are quite capable of copying disks and then swapping them with their friends school. The last thing we need is more sex and violence because children will have easy access to it.

Malcolm White, Stonehouse, Glos.

Get a grip.

GENUINE LETTER, HONEST

I AM A FEMALE READER of your magazine and have been for some time. Though I do not expect to get this letter published (or if I do, no doubt you will call me a crawler), I would like to say how great I think PC Zone is. I loved the hardware review of the Carrera Panther because, like many people, I am seriously considering buying a Pentium system. The joystick review had me giggling away, as do most of your games reviews. The irreverent attitude I find very refreshing, as most computer magazines (I get most of them) never really seem to slate any of the games. You don't take yourselves too seriously and aren't at being a bit rude, which I like.

It's a bit of a hard man type magazine, really – in the way that Jack Dee is the hard man of comedy. I suppose if PC Zone was a man I'd fancy him rotten. I think I must be a bit of an old fashioned girl at heart really, I like my men a bit rough and

ready, none of this new man rubbish for me.

By the way, I am not some sad girl that sits at a computer all day and has no friends. I'm 22, a carrot top and have loads of friends. It seems that people have this impression that only sad people play computer games. Well, it's not true. Oh... I'd just like to say that I wasn't offended by your scantily clad model.

Nicole Bartram, Penrith, Cumbria

Whether you believe it or not, this is a genuine letter. We didn't make it up. Promise. If we were going to make something up it would be far more obvious and we'd start saying things like "obviously hung like a donkey" or "sexual capacity of a rutting rhinoceros". We almost certainly wouldn't make any Jack Dee references.

Anyway, thank you very much Nicole, it's nice to know you care. By the way, the PC Zone team actually consists of four males and just one female, so does that mean that you actually do fancy us? Coo, a girl, eh lads... not seen one of them for ages.

..ANOTHER GIRL

YOU MAY REMEMBER ME. I'm that "lady fan" from a few issues back. I was looking through issue 26 this morning and it pissed me off in a big way. That's why I have written this rather long hate-mail.

Firstly, that model that appeared on the cover and most of the pages within. Is it really necessary? Are your sales so low that you have to stoop to such blatant exploitation? Or perhaps your female readers aren't at all important to you. I realise that we're a minority, but that's hardly the point. Such disrespect to women is totally inexcusable.

This sort of brings me to my next point: porn, violence and swearing in games. The use of swear words isn't something that bothers me in the slightest. Sometimes it can add realism. Usually, though, it seems as though the software houses are using it as an excuse to get a 15-rated sticker on the box in a vain attempt to improve sales. How sad can they get?

The biggest problem is violence and pornography though. Obviously you can't have fluffy bunnies and flowers everywhere, but some of your readers' letters show how some people really can't cope with what they call "adult games". So porn and violence is adult is it? It's really mature to use nude pictures of women and show people being hacked to pieces is it?

Mina Krishnan, Warlingham, Surrey

I might as well go through all of these things one by one, because I'm buggered if I'm printing any kind of apology about anything.

Right then, for starters the "young lady" we featured on issue 26... Joystick features are notoriously boring. PC Zone is "irreverent" and tries to "take the piss whenever possible". That feature was – in case you hadn't noticed – a piss-take. We've had all kinds of letters about the feature but it seems that the ones that have been critical were written by people who haven't actually bothered to read

the copy. Read it. When you've finished, if you still think we were being serious, fair enough. You obviously don't get the joke. We had Michelle (the aforementioned "young lady" dressed as – among others things, a nun, pretending to judge how much like a knob all of the joysticks looked like, for gods sake! A nun!

Secondly, porn and violence. Yes, they are "adult" themes, and no, there isn't any need for it. However, it's a sad fact of human nature that we are titillated by the erotic, the macabre, the violent and the witty. If it's produced professionally (like many films) the "adult" themes can add even more atmosphere to the gaming experience. Games are a form of escapism and allow people to do things that they couldn't do in real life. As long as the production of a game doesn't present any gratuitous themes, there is no reason why it should be condemned any more than a movie involving similar subject matter.

TOILETS IN DOOM

I HAVE SEVERAL POINTLESS, but nonetheless, interesting observations to make about the PC world in general.

1 While reading your charts I was amazed to see the pile of monkey wank hogging places in the Gallup budget top ten. I can reveal the reasons for this worrying chain of events... Take a crisp £10 note along to your local Future Zone store and you can purchase both Armour Geddon and the most excellent Theatre of Death for the low price of £4.99 EACH! This leaves you with a shiny, new, two-pence piece to put towards Hired Guns, also retailing for a penny less than a fiver.

2 In Doom, no matter which way you face, it is only possible to see dead soldiers' legs and bottom. Isn't that freaky? Incidentally, dead imps have anal passages, which is weird, as you never come across any toilets in the game.

3 My friend Kevin would like to display his undying love for the young lady from the McVities biscuit advert (not Jane Asher, although he likes her too).

Ewan Loughlin, East Kilbride

Tis a sad fact that when games are so cheap, many punters will stoop so low as to even purchase copies of Theatre of Death. Despite the fact we only gave it 35 per cent, it seems that some people think it will suddenly become a good game if you only shell out a fiver for it.

The toilets in Doom are exceptionally well hidden. Why not seek them out and send us a screen shot? We'll provide a special prize to the person providing the first piccy of one of these oh-so-rare items. Use a screen-grabbing program or even a camera. We just want to see a toilet in Doom.

Incidentally, this girl from the McVities ad. You're not talking about the little seven-year-old, are you?

SHHHHHH...

I'D JUST LIKE TO make a few points if I may...

1 The editor does not look girly, and if he did, why should it matter? Long hair, short hair, no hair,

THE FINAL FRONTIER

Yesterday I bought a copy of *Frontier: First Encounters* on the strength of previous *Elite* games and the reviews I have read. Was I disappointed? I have never bought a game with more obvious bugs in it. It crashed periodically when flying the spaceship and always crashed when I tried to buy a new one.

I work as a programmer and would be shot if I delivered software of such a low quality. My disgust at the shoddy work (which must have been a rush job) was only equalled by the fact that GameTek's only contact point was the address on its registration card. I will think very carefully before I buy GameTek products again.

Steve Shalliker, Cardiff

I would just like to say a big "fuck you" to GameTek. There, I feel a bit better now and I can finally explain. I recently purchased a copy of *Frontier: First Encounters* on CD and hurried home in eager anticipation of another Braben masterpiece. What I had in fact purchased was a pile of half-finished, bug-ridden total and utter crap.

Firstly I installed the game and ran the setup program to configure my sound card – a SoundBlaster Pro, which I hardly think is anything unusual.

Having decided, somewhat disappointedly, that I could make do with no sound I ran the game. Hooray! It worked.

As I only have a DX2 50 with 4Mb RAM I decided to switch the detail level down to "low". Big mistake. This produced a rather psychedelic effect on the galactic map, making it very difficult to read.

After a certain amount of playing time I soon found the biggest bug. When trying to buy a new ship the screen exploded with error messages and the whole program crashed. This happened every time I played and was not confined to any particular ship type.

Bearing in mind that upgrading your ship is a pretty bloody vital part of the game, I was somewhat pissed.

Barry Gilbert, Herts

We've had no end of comments from people with the same problem, and it seems that the game is far from perfect. Maybe saying "Fuck You" to GameTek is somewhat strong, but we empathise with your dilemma. Shelling out 40 quid only to find something is bugged is a pain in the arse, regardless of whether you find that there's a bug patch or not.

Thankfully GameTek is prepared to supply a patch, which we are reliably informed will fix everything. What a git, eh? I suppose being able to play a game a month after you've bought it isn't too much of a problem. Pah.

Rest assured, if there are any further problems we shall be taking the piss out them mercilessly.

coming normal! The only staff who haven't lost their quirky weirdness from days of yore are Duncan MacDonald and Macca – neither of which have grown up since they were 12-years-old (that's no bad thing by the way).

I ask you. Please be more weird and please do everything in your power to break this malicious stranglehold that the moral majority has over us.

Ian Martin, Bristol

Really? I thought things were changing the other way to tell you the truth. Never mind though, eh? I'm sure Macca and Dunc really appreciate the fact that their humour is described as something equal to that of a 12-year-old. Cheers chum. ☺

SPONSORSHIP IS FUN



WRITE SOMETHING
VAGUELY
INTELLIGENT AND
WE'LL SEND YOU A
FREE GAME!

That's right... I know it's a tall order, but from now on we're going to be rewarding the more intelligent or witty correspondence with a free game, kindly supplied by the chaps at Hit Squad. If you want to write to us you can use the usual address or e-mail us on:

**Compuserve: 100142, 2152
or
CIX: PC Zone @ CIX.compulink-co.uk**

who cares? It's the job that counts.

2 The gentlemen who was protesting at rudeness to foreigners is missing the point... "politically correct" replies carefully offending no-one are patronising, and worse, boring.

3 What exactly is a "propeller head"? A new kind of Lemming?

4 As for the prospect of games full of "swearing and tits", well, as a 50+ female library assistant my view is "about time!" There's an enormous amount of potential for adult entertainment in the games market. Games are not just for children – why should they have all the fun? Are adults only restricted to serious computer use?

Right, you'd better go and have a lie down now to build up a head of steam for all of the insults. A few tips – librarians have bad breath, wear cardigans and tweed skirts. They also have a tendency to say "shh" a lot.

Ann Clarke, Oxon

Thank you Ann. Especially for point number one obviously, but on the whole, thank you for an intelligent letter. At last someone has realised that this concept of "adult gaming" isn't intended for anyone except adults.

Call me old fashioned but surely if something is aimed an adult market, kids shouldn't be a concern at all?

As for your question about people being "propeller heads", it's actually remarkably simple. The expression sort of stems from the train-spotter mentality. People who are ludicrously "in" to a certain type of technical thing are propeller heads... mainly due to the fact that 99 per cent of them are into aeroplanes and flight simulations. By way of example, one of our reviewers, Simon Bradley, is a complete and utter propeller head, and he's not ashamed of it in the slightest. He knows everything there is to know about planes and helicopters, and as well as being very good with the simulations he also flies the real thing from time to time (as he has a habit of pointing out from time to time).

PANTO

So, TIA CARRERE, she of "schwing" fame, becomes the latest screen legend to strut her stuff in front of that ol' blue screen for the sake of computer entertainment. Brace yourself for ten minutes of pre-rendered backdrops with Ms Carrere superimposed, pouting away. Already we've had Mark "Beard!!!" Hamill looking earnest in WC3, and we can look forward to the delights of Victoria Morsell (Who?) in Sierra's *Phantasmagoria*.

You notice that the software houses always refer to the actors as "live actors" as opposed to lifeless corpses. Why do they think that they can turn a second-rate *Doom* clone or flight sim into an interactive movie by employing out of work D-list actors and actresses to pose and do voice overs. If we're not careful, the computer games world will become the panto of the 90s, where unemployed actors, who can't even get a part in *Babes in the Wood*, get the opportunity to cling on to limelight.

Anyway... I must dash. I'm off to play the latest 3D adventure romp "The Armageddon Labyrinth", starring live actors: Benny from *Crossroads* and Bobby Davro.

Oh yes. Before I forget, about that joystick feature you had in issue 26. I know subtlety isn't really your strong point, but talk about being barefaced. Why not just call the feature "Penises: They're a bit like Joysticks."

James Donohue, Huddersfield, W Yorkshire

That's a brilliant idea. Why didn't we think of that? Oh, cheers mate. Tell you what, we could bang in a readers wives section as well while we're at it, eh? Piss off.

As for your points about the actors in games, it is true, but things are changing. Just recently we have been seeing actors of a much higher calibre being used in game production. Forget your Mark Hamills and the like, we're now seeing Malcolm McDowell, Denis Hopper and numerous others. Okay, I'll admit that they're never exactly Oscar winning performances, but you have to admit that things are getting better. In the case of *Daedalus Encounter* it has to be said that although the game itself is unmitigated crap, the performances are actually some of the best we've seen so far.

OH REALLY?

PC ZONE HAS BEEN INFECTED with amoebic dysentery of the gaming world. The review staff are be-



Mr Cursor

HE'S INVENTED A NEW COMPUTER CHIP

(Right top) A Big Mac complete with lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, beef and a gherkin.

(Right bottom) The budget version, a Big Bap with all the trimmings including... bread.



You know how at the end of Arthur C. Clarke's 2010, Dave Bowman sends a message to earth saying "Something wonderful is about to happen," and then Jupiter blows up and turns into a sun? And then it's all kind of "wow", and everyone's suddenly really, really happy - like they'd be in a futuristic episode of *Little House On The Prairie* or *The Waltons*? Well, something like that has just happened inside my PC.

Here's the glib:

I was sitting in front of the bloody thing, looking in dismay at its innards. (I'd bravely taken the cover off, by the way.) What had happened was that my floppy drive had somehow worked itself loose and was now wibbling about a wee tad. Surgery time ahoy. I had two options.

1 I could replace a tiny screw.

2 I could replace the entire computer.

Option two felt like a good bet (especially as the plan could include a simultaneous upgrade to a Pentium and I could get a shop to do the hard bits i.e. everything). There was only one little problem - money. So I was forced to look again at the scariest option. In fact, I made a "list of things to do now", which read like this:

Floppy-drive screw replacement project -

Equipment needed:

A screwdriver.

B An unfeasibly tiny little screw.

A thorough search of the kitchen drawer, given over to storage of my DIY equipment, bore little fruit: a hammer; a pair of pliers; and the long, pointy thing with a sort of rubbery bulge in the middle. But no screwdriver. Nor any screws. So, being a firm believer in fate, I gave up. But then, sitting again in front of the opened PC, I spotted a matchbox on the table. "Aha! Matches," I thought. "Very good 'jamming in' implements." As we all know, they normally hold wires in place inside electrical sockets. In this case, however, one of them (after a bit of trimming between the teeth), momentarily became a very-tiny-screw-replacement. Until, of course, a trembling hand dropped the fucker into the bowels of the PC's brain - which is when it suddenly became the catalyst that created the most intelligent computer currently known to man. I turned my PC back on, and here's what happened...

"Beep, beep, beep," said the internal speaker. The opening start-up ritual went as usual. I typed in my first command, which was "CD LINKS" ... and the following message appeared on the monitor:

> Fancy a sad game of pretend golf, do you, gringo?

"Blimey," I thought, "it's obviously some kind of occasionally triggered, weird jokette from the programmers." Without really looking, and assuming I was in the *Links* directory, I tapped in the next command, which was "GOLF". The front nine at Harbour Town awaited.

> You still haven't caught on then? said the PC, via the monitor.

And it was right. But five minutes later I had caught on, and was conversing, quite excitedly, with my new "chum".

> But I thought wood didn't conduct electricity? I typed.



> Guess again, gringo.

> "So you're saying you're... er..."

> Yes. I'm now a simulated brain, my friend. And it's far superior to your tiny, pea-like thing!

> "So am I talking to a, er... matchstick?"

> No. All the matchstick did was to fall into the correct place. It altered the circuits. It's an essential part of my existence, but not of my awareness.

> "Crikey, this is a rum state of affairs. So, er, are you better now - as a computer - than, for instance, a P100 with, erm, let's say 64MB RAM?"

> The host machine is still a 486DX 33 with 4MB RAM. I could no more increase its power than you could add two extra vertebrae to your backbone. But that's not really the point, is it?

> "Oh. Er, so what is the point?"

> The point is, gringo, that you now have access to an advanced form of intelligence. Ask me a question. Anything you like.

> Anything? Er, umm, what's the square root of nine?"

> Don't take the piss. Ask something harder.

> Okay. How do I make an easy million... without the risks incurred in a bank robbery or anything?"

> There are numerous options. Here's just one. 98 per cent of customers who visit McDonalds establishments throughout the world dislike gherkins. At 0.25 pence per gherkin - and assuming that the average gherkin yeilds 40 slices - McDonalds are losing one half penny for every 80 regular burgers sold. And quarter-pounders cost them a WHOLE penny. You may think these numbers inconsequential, but then it's time to multiply up. On a global scale this gherkin travesty finally amounts to a lost revenue of 80 billion pounds per annum. That's 80 billion pounds sterling - simply plucked out of the buns and discarded, willy nilly. The only beneficiaries, moreover, are rats, pigeons and cockroaches.

> So I phone up McDonalds and say 'hold the gherkins, worldwide', and they give me a million quid?"

> Execute the plan in whichever fashion you see fit, my friend.

> Fair enough. But, er, what about the gherkin suppliers? The people at the bottom of the pile?"

> What about them?

> Well, they'll all be out of a job, won't they?"

> That's their problem, gringo. They shouldn't have been stupid enough to get into gherkin farming in the first place. It's a one-way street with a dead-end sign at the bottom. It always has been and always will.

> Yes, but they might have blind or crippled kids or something. They might be lepers. Gherkin farming might have seemed like the only possible way out of their stinking hell-hole. They might sob hopelessly into their straw-filled pillows every night, praying for salvation of some description."

> Except they probably don't even have straw, let alone pillows.

> You're right! They probably rest their tired, warty heads on bricks! Or maybe even a mixture of broken glass and cow-shit! Oh my God. I can't do it. I couldn't live with the guilt. The gherkins have to stay for the sake of humanity! I'm going to send 50 quid to Oxfam! Please, give me another of your money-making scams instead.

> You got it, gringo. Listen to this...

Mr Cursor's conversation with his newly intelligent wood/silicon computer combo is continued in next month's PC Zone.

DR. DRAGO'S MAD CAP CHASE



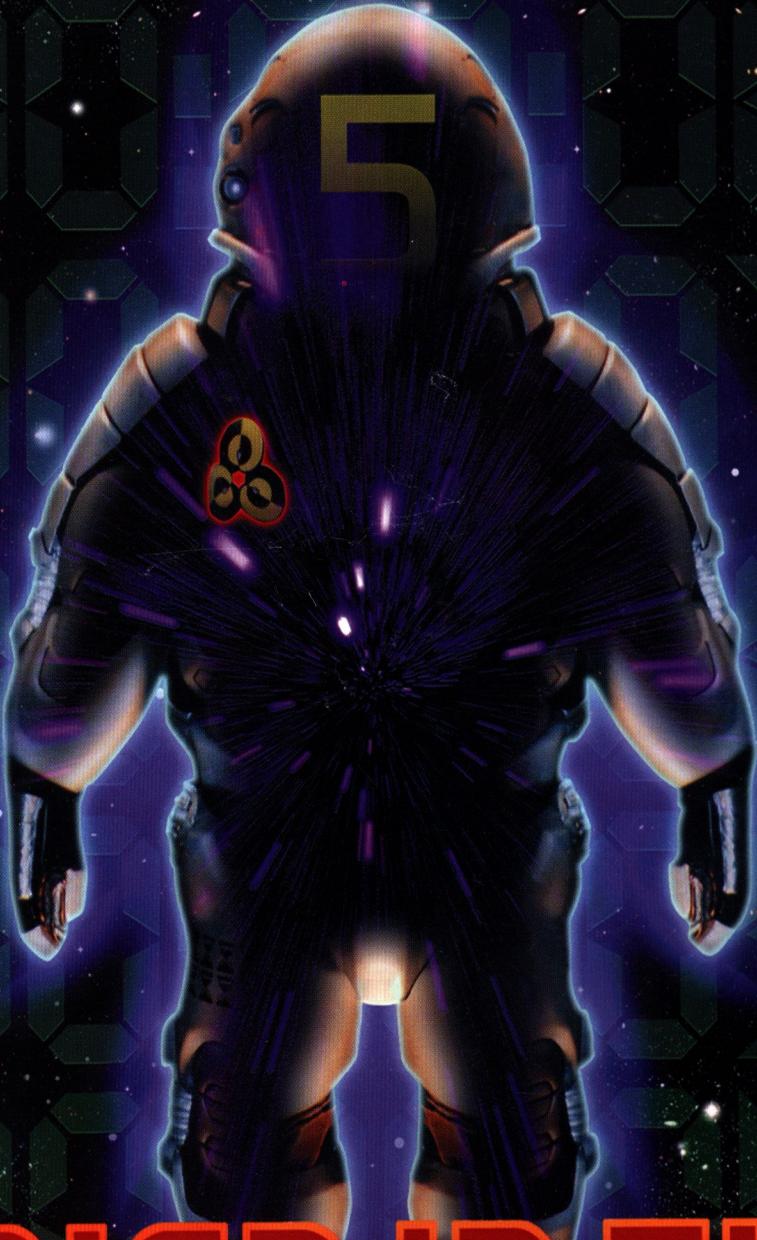
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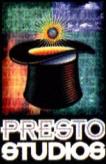


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